WORLD

Fashion visionary Armani dies at 91

≫ Page: 6 ≪

BUSINESS

Market fails to hold on to GST cut gains

≫ Page: 7 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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SALAR DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY
wishes its readers a
Happy Teachers' Day

India's infant mortality rate drops to record low of 25

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

India's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has touched a historic low of 25 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2023 report released by the Registrar General of India. This marks a 37.5 per cent drop from 40 in 2013, and a dramatic 80 per cent fall from 129 in 1971.

IMR is a key public health indicator that reflects access to healthcare, nutrition, and maternal care. The report shows significant progress, but also highlights regional disparities. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest IMRs at 37, while Manipur had the lowest at 3. Among large states, Kerala stood out with an IMR of 5, the only one in single digits.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- The report shows significant progress, but also highlights regional disparities. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest IMRs at 37, while Manipur had the lowest at 3.

The gap between rural and urban areas has narrowed. IMR in rural areas dropped from 44 to 28, and in urban areas from 27 to 18 over the last decade.

The report also highlights falling birth and death rates. India's birth rate has declined from 36.9 in 1971 to 18.4 in 2023, with a 14 per cent drop in the last decade. Rural birth rates fell from 22.9 to 20.3, while urban rates dropped from 17.3 to 14.9. Bihar reported the highest birth rate (25.8), and Andaman and Nicobar Islands the lowest (10.1).

The death rate fell from 14.9 in 1971 to 6.4 in 2023. Rural areas saw a dip from 7.2 (2022) to 6.8, while urban areas went from 6.0 to 5.7. Chandigarh recorded the lowest death rate (4) and Chhattisgarh the highest (8.3). —*PTI*

Kukis, Centre sign deal for free movement in Manipur

This comes days ahead of PM's first visit to strife-torn state

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

In a move towards restoring peace in Manipur, two major Kuki-Zo groups, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF), on Thursday signed a revised Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the Centre and the Manipur government. The Centre claimed that Kuki civil society groups had agreed to allow free movement in Manipur.

In a parallel development, the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), a civil society body, announced the reopening of Na-tional Highway-02 to ensure free movement of commuters and essential supplies.

The pact includes key provisions: maintaining Manipur's territorial integrity, relocating designated camps from vulnerable areas, reducing the number of such camps, and relocating weapons to nearby CRPF and BSF camps.

The agreement, effective for one year, was finalised after a series of meetings between the Kuki delegation and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in New Delhi. The deal also mandates stringent physical verification of armed cadres to identify and de-list any foreign nationals. KNO and UPF, comprising 16 and 7 constituent groups respectively, also committed to pursuing a negotiated solution for lasting peace in the region.

Manipur has been reeling from ethnic violence since May 2023. The unrest has claimed around 260 lives *PHOTO: PTI*

Officials believe the agreement will positively impact ongoing peace efforts in Manipur, which has been reeling from ethnic violence since May 2023, triggered by a tribal solidarity march opposing the Meitei commu-nity's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. The unrest has claimed around 260 lives from both Kuki and Meitei communities, as well as security personnel.

- The Kuki-Zo Council, a civil society body, announced the reopening of National Highway-02 to ensure free movement of commuters and essential supplies.

The developments come amid speculation over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's likely visit to Manipur next week, his first since the violence began. In anticipation, the Churachandpur District Magistrate has declared a 'no drone zone' to enhance security during the potential VVIP visit. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

THE HIMALAYAN TRAGEDY

SC says illegal felling of trees led to floods, landslides

SC takes note of videos showing timber logs being washed down by floodwaters in Himachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday warned that if rampant illegal felling of Himalayan trees continues, "we will be left with no forests." Taking serious note of videos showing huge volumes of timber logs being washed down by floodwaters in Himachal Pradesh, the court said it "prima facie" appears that illegal logging is occurring on a large scale in the hills.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran linked the destruction to the unprecedented flash floods and landslides devastating parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab this monsoon. "We have seen pictures of Punjab... entire fields and crops are inundated," the CJI noted. "Development has to be balanced with mitigating measures."

The bench issued notices to the Centre, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), and the governments of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Punjab, seeking their response within two weeks.

110 km
of international border fence, 90 BSF posts in Punjab, Jammu destroyed amid floods

The petition, filed by Anamika Rana through advocates Akash Vashishtha and Shubham Upadhyay, seeks the formation of a SIT to probe the causes of the disasters, along with an independent expert committee to assess ecological damage. It also accuses both Central and state of lacking effective disaster preparedness. The plea cites multiple incidents of people trapped in tunnels and "near-death situations," and alleges complete failure to protect the fragile Himalayan ecology. —*PTI*

K'taka mandates immediate aid for accident victims

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

The State government has reaffirmed the legal obligation of all medical establishments and practitioners to provide emergency treatment to accident victims without any delay or demand for advance payment. Under the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments Act, 2007, the circular clarified that the term 'accident victim' includes not just road mishaps but also "accidental or induced burns or poisoning or criminal assaults and the like which are medico legal or potential medico legal cases." The government said every hospital shall be required to provide immediate medical screening services and first-aid at free of cost. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Amid US tariffs, EU Chief & Modi agree to seal trade deal

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

India and European Union on Thursday pledged to seal their much-awaited free trade deal by December with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 27-nation bloc's top leaders Antonio Costa and Ursula von der Leyen pledging to promoting a rules-based global order, amid Washington's disruptive trade policies.

In a joint phone call with European Council president Costa and European Commission chief von der Leyen, Modi reiterated India's consistent support for peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict and early restoration of peace and stability.

The leaders underlined the role of the India-EU strategic partnership in jointly addressing global issues, fostering stability, and promoting a rules-based order for mutual prosperity, an Indian readout said.

The phone talks among the three leaders came as India looks to blunt the impact of the Trump administration's 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods.

The three leaders also discussed holding the next India-EU summit in India at an early date of mutual convenience and PM Modi invited Costa and von der Leyen for the same.

On the Ukraine conflict, von der Leyen said India has an important role to play in bringing Russia to end "its war of aggression and helping create a path towards peace". —*PTI*

GST dhamaka: Hotels, gyms, dining get cheaper

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Hotel rooms with tariffs up to ₹7,500 per night will also see a reduction in GST from 12 per cent to 5 per cent, a change expected to boost domestic tourism and hospitality

In a major relief for consumers, salon, gym, and yoga centre services are set to get cheaper as the GST Council has slashed the tax rate from 18 per cent with input tax credit (ITC) to 5 per cent without ITC, effective September 22. The move comes as part of a broader GST rate rationalisation announced at the 56th meeting of the GST Council, aimed at making essential services and products more affordable.

Hotel rooms with tariffs up to Rs 7,500 per night will also see a reduction in GST from 12 per cent to 5 per cent, a change expected to boost domestic tourism and hospitality. Industry leaders, including MakeMyTrip and Radisson Hotel Group, have welcomed the reform as a timely measure to stimulate travel, particularly ahead of the festive and wedding season.

Additionally, a range of daily-use products will become cheaper. These include toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoos, toilet soaps, hair oil, shaving cream, aftershave lotion, talcum powder, and face powder, all of which will now attract 5 per cent GST, down from 12–18 per cent. The finance ministry emphasised that these are common household items used across income groups, justifying their inclusion in the reduced slab.

However, some products will remain at higher tax rates , liquid soaps and mouthwash, for instance, will continue to be taxed at 18 per cent.

The rate cuts take effect on 22 September, coinciding with the first day of Navaratri, and are expected to drive consumption while easing the cost burden for the average consumer. —*PTI*

K'TAKA PONTIFFS MEET SHAH, SEEK NIA PROBE IN D'STHALA

MANGALURU, 4 SEPT

Pontiffs from various Karnataka mutts, under the banner of 'Sanatan Sant Niyoga', met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi, demanding an NIA investigation into the Dharmasthala controversy. The case involves a whistleblower's shocking claims of hundreds of buried bodies, including women allegedly showing signs of sexual assault.

The delegation warned of a larger conspiracy by vested interests, both domestic and international, to defame Hindu temples and sow fear among devotees. Shah reportedly assured the seers that the matter is being closely monitored and would be discussed at a forthcoming Cabinet meeting.

Shah also discussed plans for new legislation to combat misinformation and hate speech targeting religious institutions. Home Minister G Parameshwara questioned the push for an NIA probe, saying that the State had already constituted a SIT. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

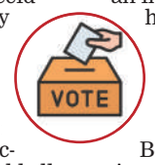
State bats for ballots in local polls

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

The State Government has urged the State Election Commission (SEC) to use ballot papers instead Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in all future panchayat and urban local body polls in the State, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said.

There is erosion of confidence and credibility among people towards EVMs, he claimed after the Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet has also decided to authorise the SEC to "prepare, revise and, if necessary, redo" the electoral rolls for local body polls, the minister said, citing discrepancies in electoral rolls and allegations of "vote theft".

"For the State Election Commission to prepare electoral rolls and do the necessary revision for the local body polls, the cabinet has decided to make necessary laws and to amend rules," Patil added.



Speaking to reporters here after the Cabinet meeting, Patil said, "It has been decided to recommend to the SEC to hold all the upcoming local body polls using ballot paper instead of EVMs."

"In the next 15 days, all rules and required legal changes will be made," he said, adding that the government has made its recommendations, and once it frames the rules, it will be binding on the SEC.

Pointing out that the SEC is an independent body and they have the responsibility of electoral rolls preparation, Patil said, the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, Municipality Act and the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act gives details about how the elections have to be conducted and the rules that the State government can make in this regard. —*PTI*

Rape survivor sent to accused's home in MP, raped again

LUCKNOW, 4 SEPT

Child Welfare Committee officials allegedly sent a 15-year-old rape survivor in Madhya Pradesh to the home of the accused, where she was raped yet again.

An FIR was registered against 10 people, including the CWC Chairman.

The case is from 16 January, when the girl went missing after school hours from Panna. Cops found her in Gurugram, Haryana, on 17 February along with the accused, according to NDTV. The accused was arrested under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and was booked for rape and abduction.

The girl was initially kept at One Stop Centre (OSC) for rehabilitation in Panna, but officials sent her to the house of the accused's sister-in-law, who turned out to be the girl's cousin. When the accused was released, he repeatedly raped the survivor. He has since been arrested. The girl's family filed a complaint with the Panna Collectorate. To protect themselves, officials sent her back to the OSC in April. It was during counselling that the rapes were revealed. —*Salar News*

BEST RESEARCH INSTITUTE TOO

IISc B'luru is the best varsity for 10th year in a row

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has once again emerged as the top university and research institution in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025, released today by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. IISc retained its position as India's best university for the tenth consecutive year and ranked second in the overall category, following IIT Madras, which topped the overall list for the seventh year in a row.

In the research institutions category, IISc was ranked first, ahead of IIT Madras. The Bengaluru-based institute also remains a frontrunner in driving scientific innovation and higher education in India.

Among universities, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) retained second place, while Manipal Academy of Higher Education, also from Karnataka, made history as the first private institution to enter the top three in this category. Jamia Millia Islamia dropped to fourth. In the engineering category, IIT Madras leads. NIT Tiruchirappalli is the only non-IIT among the top ten. Delhi University's Hindu College has retained its first positions in the colleges category. —*PTI*

One nation-one tax is one nation-nine taxes: Priyank

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

Congress leader Priyank Kharge on Thursday criticised the Centre's recent GST reforms, and said that the "One Nation, One Tax" had turned into "One Nation, 9 Taxes." Priyank also claimed that the Congress party had long pushed for a simpler GST system with lower rates to ease the burden on farmers, small businesses, and the middle class. "Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge had been consistently batting for 18 per cent cap or lower on GST Rates," Priyank said. He also questioned how the Centre plans to compensate states like Karnataka after simplifying the tax system. Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara said taxes on many more essential items should have been be reduced. He said the government should study how GST is implemented in other countries —*PTI*

Gig worker held for assaulting woman in City PG

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

A 30-year-old gig worker has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 21-year-old woman and stealing from her paying guest accommodation in BTM Layout in the City. The incident, which occurred on 29 August, was captured on CCTV. According to police, the suspect, Naresh Pattam, who was passing by the PG facility, noticed the door open and the security guard asleep. "He then entered the premises, locked the other rooms from outside and went inside the victim's room," a police official stated. Pattam reportedly stole Rs 2,500 from the victim's belongings. Originally from Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh, he had recently moved to the city after being released on bail for two previous robbery cases. —*PTI*

Techie turned chaat seller held for dowry death

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

A former software engineer, who left his job to sell panipuri, has been arrested following the alleged suicide of his 27-year-old wife, Shilpa Panchangamath, at their home in Suddaguntepalya. Shilpa was found dead on Tuesday night. Her mother, Sharada, filed a police complaint alleging ongoing dowry harassment. Shilpa married Praveen, the son of the late Shambulingaiah, on 5 December 2022, with the family claiming they spent approximately Rs 35 lakh on the wedding. Following their marriage, the couple lived in BTM Layout, and Praveen's demands for Rs 5 lakh towards his business reportedly led to mental and physical abuse. Despite attempts to resolve issues, Shilpa tragically passed away on 26 August. Police have launched a probe. —*Salar News*

Sex racket busted in Udupi, six arrested

UDUPI, 4 SEPT

Kundapura Town Police have dismantled a honey-trap racket, arresting six individuals, including a woman, following the extortion of a local man. The police confiscated Rs 30,000 in cash and two vehicles linked to the crime. The accused have been identified as Savad alias Achchu, 28, Saifulla, 38, Mohammad Naseer Sharif, 36, Abdul Sattar, 23, Abdul Azeez, 26, and Asma, 43. Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar reported that the victim, Sandeep Kumar, was lured by Savad and assaulted upon arrival at a rented house. The assailants forced him to withdraw Rs 40,000 from an ATM and stole Rs 6,000 in cash. Previous fraud cases against Naseer and Asma have been uncovered, and further investigations may lead to more arrests. —*Salar News*

No advance payment needed for accident victims: Govt

Burns, poisoning, criminal assault are considered accidents

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

The State government has reaffirmed the legal obligation of all medical establishments and practitioners to provide emergency treatment to accident victims without any delay or demand for advance payment.

A circular issued on Wednesday sad, "It is considered necessary to reiterate and direct the enforcing agencies and accident victims regarding the provisions of law and schemes prevailing in Karnataka regarding the treatment of accident victims in the state."

Under the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments Act, 2007, the circular clarified that the term 'accident victim' includes not just road mishaps but also "accidental or induced burns or poisoning or criminal assaults and the like which are medico legal or potential medico legal cases."

It added, "Whenever such an accident victim comes to a medical establishment or is brought before a medical establishment, he should be treated in such emergencies without insisting on advance payment."

Any violation will invite penalties up to Rs 1 lakh under Section 19(5), the circular said.

Citing the Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional Act, 2016, the government reminded that every hospital shall be required to provide immediate medical screening services and first-aid at free of cost and the appropriate treatment as it considers necessary, in order to improve the health conditions and recovery of any such injured person.

Hospitals lacking facilities must stabilise the patient before transfer, along with complete medical records, it said.

The circular also invoked Section 187 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, cautioning that failure to comply could lead to imprisonment up to three months or fines up to Rs 500, and for repeat offences, imprisonment up to six months or fines up to Rs 1,000.

Referring to the Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme, 2025, it said, "A road accident victim shall be eligible for cashless treatment in any designated hospital for an amount up to rupees one lakh fifty thousand per victim for period of seven days." —*PTI*

SLAMS MISINFORMATION

CM inaugurates 2nd Phase of KC Valley project; to fill 272 lakes

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah** inaugurated the launch of the Second Phase of the KC Valley Project, which aims to fill 272 lakes in Kolar district by supplying it with treated sewage water from the Lakshmi Sagar Pump House. The second phase project is set to be completed by December 2025, and implemented at a cost of Rs 446 crore.

"Since there are no rivers in the Kolar and Chikkaballapur regions, this project will benefit farmers," he said on X. "The projects we undertook during our previous tenure to develop groundwater in the districts surrounding Bengaluru have been a significant step toward improving the living standards of farmers in this region."

The KC Valley project gets its name from the Koramangala-Challaghatta valley drainage system in City.

Siddaramaiah also dismissed "misinformation around the project. "It has been established that there is no harm to crops or livestock," he said. "This water is not used for drinking."

He noted that "the groundwater level has improved in the areas where the lakes have been filled".

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar noted the projects connection with the Yettinahole project. "This project of filling lakes with water will contribute to the development of agricultural activities in the arid regions of Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts," he added. —*PTI*

State to begin survey of transgenders & Devadasis

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Minister of Women and Child Development, Lakshmi Hebbalkar launched a comprehensive baseline survey of the transgender community along with a resurvey of former Devadasis.

The Chief Minister and Hebbalkar officially flagged off the initiative by unveiling a campaign poster at Vidhana Soudha in the city on Thursday.

"For the first time in the country, a preliminary survey of gender minorities and a re-survey of former Devadasi women has initiated across the State, Siddaramaiah said.

The survey, led by the Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC), aims to collect accurate data on the social and economic conditions of two historically marginalized groups — transgender individuals and former Devadasis — in order to design effective rehabilitation and support programmes for them. The objectives of the survey are to document social and economic status of transgender individuals and enable targeted welfare schemes and policy planning.

KSWDC chairperson, Parmavati, principal secretary of the Women and Child Development Department, Shamla Iqbal and managing director of KSWDC, Mahesh Babu were present on the occasion. Senior government officials and representatives from the transgender and Devadasi communities also took part in the programme.

—*Salar News*

DKS says won't back down from Bidadi land acquisition

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the government would not back down from attempting to acquire land for the Bidadi Township project, despite stiff opposition and protests from farmers. "A loan of 27,000 crore rupees has been taken for the Bidadi Township project, and there is no question of abandoning the project," he said on Thursday. He noted that farmers had voluntarily given 960 acres of land for the project. The project requires land acquisition of 9,600 acres.

"We are not just thinking about land acquisition in Bidadi but we are also thinking about land acquisition in Upper Krishna project and

Mekedatu project," he said.

"I have assured that farmers who will lose their property due to this project will receive two to three times more compensation," he said adding that the government is giving farmers the option to choose other land, such as in commercial or residential areas.

He quipped that he did not want to go to jail like former CM Yediyurappa by notifying lands for the township.

"I will assist farmers within the legal framework," he said. —*Salar News*

MYSURU DASARA TO DAZZLE WITH DRONES, LIGHTS

MYSURU, 4 SEPT

The Mysuru Dasara is set to scale new heights this year, with enhanced illumination displays and a spectacular 3,000-drone show, CESC Managing Director Munigopal Raju said on Thursday. Raju said that the Chamundi City will glow brighter than ever, with aesthetic lighting planned to complement the majestic Mysore Palace illumination.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Estimated cost: ₹ 9-10 crore

- **60–70 Light Installations**, including creative replicas and thematic structures.
- **Massive drone show at Bannimantap**: 3,000 drones – double the number used in 2024. Aerial visuals of Goddess Chamundeshwari, the iconic Dasara Ambari, and more

A total of 136km of roads across the city will be adorned with vibrant lights, just like last year – but this time, with major upgrades.

—*Salar News*

GOVT COMPLETES FIRST-EVER SURVEY ON WATER BODIES

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

The first-ever Census of 2.42 crore water bodies has been completed, and over 25 lakh sq km of aquifers mapped under the National Aquifer Management Programme, National Water Mission Director N Ashok Babu said.

The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal and the Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal are at various levels of hearing, he added.

He was delivering the keynote address at the Federation of Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) India CSR and Sustainability Awards on Thursday. "As of now, as per the Central Ground Water Resources Assessment Report 2024, there are 102 over exploited districts and 22 critical districts, whereas 69 districts are semi critical, rest 512 districts are considered safe as far as ground water levels are concerned," Babu said.

Awards have been finalised for the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal, Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal and Kaveri Water Disputes Tribunal, he added.

The director said that the Tungabhadra Board at Hospet is working to regulate supply of water, power and maintenance of Tungabhadra Dam.

The director said that over two crore water conservation works and 142 crore afforestation activities have been completed, alongside 639 District Water Conservation Plans.

Talking about water conservation, he said that through the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan – Catch the Rain' campaign, India has achieved 11.36 billion cubic metres increase in water tables, greater than the storage of the Bhakra Nangal Dam. —*PTI*

Won't contest from Tumakuru next polls: Sommana

MYSURU, 4 SEPT

Union Minister V Somanna said that he will not be contesting from Tumakuru parliamentary constituency in the next elections.

The BJP minister said he had earlier contested from the seat on the directions from the party's High Command.

He noted that the Centre had initiated a slew of development works in Tumakuru after he was elected as Union Minister.

"Works which were pending for 50 years gained momentum" under me, he said. He said the party High Command will decide where he should contest from. —*Salar News*

Traffic curbs in City ahead of Eid-e-Milad

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

The Bengaluru City Traffic Police have announced major traffic diversions and parking bans in several parts of the city on Friday, September 5, to facilitate the Eid-e-Milad procession. The procession, featuring tableaux and bands, will move towards Kambal Posh Dargah between 10 am and 10 pm, affecting traffic across KG Halli, Pulakeshinagar, Shivajinagar and nearby areas.

Traffic will be completely barred between Nagawara Junction and Patari Circle, Netaji Junction and Tannery Road, and on Haines Road. MM Road will operate as a one-way from Mask Junction towards Netaji Junction.

Vehicles heading from Nagawara to Shivajinagar are advised to take the Hennur–Lingarajapuram–Robertson Road route, while those from Shivajinagar to Nagawara will be diverted via Spencer Road, Cole's Road and Wheeler Road. Commuters from RT Nagar, Netaji Road and surrounding areas will also face diversions through Cole's Road, Clarence Overbridge and Outer Ring Road.

Parking will be strictly prohibited along major stretches, including Netaji Road, Haines Road, MM Road, Mosque Road, Cole's Road, Sounders Road, St John's Church Road and Millers Road.

Police have urged commuters to plan ahead and use metro or public transport where possible.witnessing tremendous growth.

—*Salar News*

A vendor displays flags at his shop on Thursday, ahead of Eid-e-Milad-Un-Nabi which marks Prophet Muhammad's birth anniversary, celebrated by Muslims

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Police search YouTuber Sameer's flat in City

The Belthangady police in Dakshina Kannada district on Thursday searched the City residence of YouTuber Sameer MD, who is facing a case registered at the Dharmasthala police station. The operation was carried out under a search warrant issued by the Belthangady court on 3 September. A computer and a mobile phone were seized for further forensic examination. Sameer, was recently arrested for his arrested for his coverage of Dharmasthala case.

LEADS IN EXPORTS, IT

State attracted Rs 12 lakh cr investments in 3yrs

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

Karnataka has attracted new investment proposals worth over Rs 12 lakh crore between financial years 2021-22 and 2024-25 due to the highly vibrant and progressive investment climate in the State, a study by the MSME Export Promotion Council said.

The study by the MSME Export Promotion Council said the investment climate in the State strongly supports robust foreign direct investment (FDI) along with strategic infrastructure projects, forward-looking policy frameworks, talent and innovation ecosystem.

"The new investment projects announced amounted to Rs 12,01,175 crore. Projects completed were worth Rs 1,40,476 crore, and pending projects valued at Rs 36,078 crore were revived during the period. Investment projects worth Rs 9,49,370 crore were under various stages of implementation," the chairman of the MSME EPC, DS Rawat said.

Citing NITI Aayog, the MSME EPC said the State leads India in innovation and contributes 20 per cent of the country's exports.

The State has a dominant position in aerospace exports with a 65 per cent share and machine tools output by 50 per cent, it said. State's IT exports account for about 42 percent of India's software exports.

It noted that investment projects announced during 2021-22 were worth Rs 1,45,035 crore, Rs 5,13,364 crore in 2022-23, Rs 2,27,706 crore in 2023-24 and Rs 3,15,069 crore in 2024-25.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) are growing in Karnataka and it is estimated that the State hosts over 8.5 lakh units collectively employing nearly 70 lakh people, it said. —*PTI*

HC asks govt response on meat ban at Tumakuru temple

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

State High Court has issued a notice to the State government concerning a petition from Sri Honneshwaraswamy Devasthana Jeernodhara Seva Samithi Trust, challenging a ban on non-vegetarian food within 200 metres of the Sri Honneshwara Deity temple in Shivanagere village, of Tumakuru district. The police directive, dated 13 July, 2024, warns that violations regarding meat consumption or animal sacrifice will lead to penal action.

The trust contends that the restriction infringes upon longstanding customs of devotees and disrupts the daily lives of nearby residents. They argue, "The broader restriction on meat consumption is problematic... the 200-meter restriction would prevent villagers from cooking or eating non-vegetarian food even in their own homes."

It has clarified that no animal sacrifices occur within the temple precincts. Justice BM Shyam Prasad has asked additional government advocate to obtain instructions regarding rationale for the ban. Further hearings scheduled for 10 September. —*PTI*

J'khand ex-min booked for casteist abuse of guards

MEDININAGAR, 4 SEPT

Two bodyguards of former Jharkhand cabinet minister and Congress leader KN Tripathi have filed a police complaint accusing him of hurling casteist abuses and slapping them for failing to clear a traffic jam in Latehar district. The complaint, lodged as a 'Zero FIR' at Medininagar Town police station, alleges the incident occurred at Jubilee Chowk when Tripathi was stuck in traffic. A case has been registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Tripathi refuted the allegations, claiming that "the FIR was lodged to exact revenge," asserting he merely requested his bodyguards to be more vigilant. The Jharkhand Police Men's Association urged the DGP to take "strong action" against him. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

BJP downplays Dhinakaran's NDA exit, vows unity

CHENNAI, 4 SEPT

BJP spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy has downplayed TTV Dhinakaran's departure from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), asserting that various parties opposed to the DMK will unite ahead of the elections. He noted that while differences among allies are common, the political landscape is fluid and nothing is final at this stage. Thirupathy emphasised that the composition of the NDA in Tamil Nadu, led by the AIADMK, will be clearer closer to the polls. He also addressed Dhinakaran's claims of "betrayal" regarding the unification of AIADMK factions, insisting that BJP was not implicated. He rejected a rift involving former BJP state chief K Annamalai, who missed a meeting with Union Minister Amit Shah. *—PTI*

Gujarat govt to soon table 'Jan Vishwas Bill'

AHMEDABAD, 4 SEPT

The Gujarat government will soon introduce 'The Gujarat Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill' to decriminalise minor offences and promote ease of doing business, state minister Rushikesh Patel said on Wednesday. The bill proposes replacing punitive action with fines for offences such as unauthorised construction, encroachment, tying cattle in public places, non-removal of filth, sewage discharge without permission, and selling dairy products without a licence. It will amend provisions in 11 existing acts, including laws on municipalities, co-operatives, marketing, and urban development. It aims to simplify regulations and reduce compliance burden. *—PTI*

2 officers killed in gunfight with Maoists in J'khand

RANCHI/MEDININAGAR, 4 SEPT

Two security personnel were killed and another was injured in a gunfight with members of the banned TSPC, a splinter group of CPI (Maoist), in Jharkhand's Palamu district on Thursday, police said. The encounter between security forces and members of the proscribed Tritiya Sammelan Prastuti Committee (TSPC) outfit broke out around 12.30am in Kedal village, a senior officer said. The deceased were identified as constable Santan Mehta and constable Sunil Ram. Casualties on the Naxals' side are yet to be ascertained, Alam said. Based on information about the presence of TSPC commander Shashikant Ganjhu and his squad in Kedal village, the operation was launched, Palamu Superintendent of Police (SP) Reeshma Ramesan said. The Naxals escaped. *—PTI*

5 BJP MLAs suspended amid WB Assembly chaos

CM accuses BJP of 'sabotaging discussion' for political gains

KOLKATA, 4 SEPT

High drama unfolded in the West Bengal assembly on Thursday, as ruling TMC and opposition BJP MLAs engaged in heated verbal duels, bringing proceedings to a near standstill and leading to the suspension of five saffron party legislators.

As chaos gripped the House amid walkouts and marshals dragging out MLAs, slogans like "vote chor BJP" and "chakri chor (job thief) TMC" reverberated inside the assembly.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the BJP members traded accusations, with both sides calling it a "black day" for West Bengal's democracy.

In her address, the CM alleged that the BJP indulges in stealing votes, but lectures others on democratic processes.

The pandemonium broke out moments before the CM was scheduled to address the special session of the House during a debate on a government resolution condemning alleged atrocities against Bengali migrants.

BJP legislators vociferously protested the 2 September suspension of Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari for the special session, triggering fierce counter-sloganeering from TMC members.

As the ruckus continued, Speaker Biman Banerjee suspended BJP Chief whip Shankar Ghosh from the assembly for the remainder of the day for creating disorder.

The din intensified as BJP MLAs Agnimitra Paul, Mihir Goswami, Bankim Ghosh and Ashok Dinda were also suspended.

The CM also accused BJP of "sabotaging a serious discussion" for narrow political gains, as members of the party continued to raise slogans, interrupting her speech.

Banerjee was seen reprimanding several of her own party members for trying to rush to opposition benches during the ruckus.

Despite the chaos, Speaker Banerjee refused to adjourn the session, insisting that the proceedings continue.

Turning up the political heat, the CM accused the BJP of fostering "linguistic terrorism" and being "anti-Bengali."

After Banerjee's speech ended, the BJP legislative party staged a walkout from the assembly.

The resolution was passed through voice vote, with the BJP members walking out before voting. *—PTI*

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee gestures at opposition legislators during a special session in the state Assembly in Kolkata PHOTO: PTI

'Mulling legal route to appoint 'tainted teachers'

KOLKATA, 4 SEPT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said her government was exploring legal options to appoint "tainted" teachers of the 2016 SSC exam to Group C and D posts. She also said the state government has initiated the recruitment process of "untainted" candidates. The West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) had released a list of 1,806 "tainted" candidates last week. *—PTI*

Camps to be relocated as Kukis pledge for peace

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF) have agreed to relocate seven designated camps from conflict-prone areas as part of the renewed Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement signed with the Centre and Manipur government.

A joint monitoring group will now strictly oversee enforcement of the agreement, with violations to be dealt with firmly, including a possible review of the pact. The SoO agreement, first signed in 2008, had not been extended since February 2024 due to the ongoing ethnic unrest in the state.

Under the new terms, KNO and UPF — along with their 23 constituent groups — have pledged to com-pletely abjure violence, uphold the Constitution, respect Indian laws, and maintain the territorial integri-ty of Manipur. They are also barred from associating, directly or indirectly, with any other armed groups, domestic or foreign.

The groups must refrain from offensive operations such as ambushes, raids, sniping, extortion, and intim-idation. In return, security forces will not launch operations against them as long as they comply with the agreement.

The relocation of camps meets a long-standing demand from Meitei groups, who alleged that some Kuki militants had previously launched attacks on valley residents from these locations. They had also called for the reopening of key highways. Tripartite dialogue will work towards a political settlement within a set timeframe. *—PTI*

A joint monitoring group will see enforcement of the agreement and violations will be dealt with in a firm manner PHOTO: PTI

'Insult' of Modi's mom sparks NDA's 5-hr Bihar bandh

PATNA, 4 SEPT

Ruling NDA's five-hour Bihar bandh called to protest the alleged hurling of abuse at the mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' evoked a mixed response.

Fewer vehicles plied the roads in Patna and some private schools declared a holiday. Some shopkeepers kept their business establishments open while others closed their shutters during the bandh from 7am to noon.

BJP workers and its NDA allies hit the streets to enforce the bandh across the state.

RJD and Congress shared video clips on their social media handles alleging that BJP workers misbehaved and prevented people from reaching their places of work, railway stations and hospitals.

Senior BJP leaders participated in a dharna at the party's state unit office. *—PTI*

NEXT GENERATION REFORMS

GST 2.0 a double dose of support, growth: Modi

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

GST 2.0 is a double dose of support and growth for the nation and the next-generation reforms have been done to support India's progress in the 21st century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday.

His comments came a day after the GST Council approved a complete overhaul of the tangled Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.

In an interaction with National Teacher awardees, Modi noted that five new gems (panch ratna) have been added to India's vibrant economy through the GST reforms.

He said GST has become even simpler and new rates of 5 per cent and 18 per cent will become effective from first day of Navratri.

"GST 2.0 is a double dose of support and growth for the nation. Next generation reforms in GST has been done to support India's progress in 21st century. Five new gems (panch ratna) have been added to India's vibrant economy through GST reforms," he said.

"Without timely changes, we cannot give our country its rightful place in today's global situation. I had said from the Red Fort on 15 August this time that it is crucial to undertake next-generation reforms to make India self-reliant. I had also promised the countrymen that there would be a double blast of happiness before this Diwali and Chhath Puja," he added.

The prime minister said that during Congress regime basic household items used to be "heavily taxed" and the BJP government has tried to address those issues for ease of common man. *—PTI*

However, the wait for a true GST 2.0 continues. Whether this new GST 1.5, if it can be called that ... Whether this will ease the burden on MSMEs, time alone will tell

-Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary in-charge Communications

I am happy that the government has realised that the path on which they had walked for 8 years was wrong, and did a U-turn

-P Chidambaram, Congress leader and ex-FM

'KERALA FACES RS 8,000-10,000CR ANNUAL LOSS DUE TO GST CUTS'

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Kerala is expected to face an annual revenue loss of Rs 8,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore due to Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts, state Finance Minister KN Balagopal said on Thursday.

At a media briefing in the national capital on Thursday, Balagopal, who is part of the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF), made it clear that the state supports the GST rate cuts that will reduce prices but the central government should ensure that the rate cut benefits are passed on to the common man.

He also expressed concerns about the possibility of companies hiking prices of products before going for a price cut due to lower GST rates. The compensation should be provided for states but the issue was not taken seriously during the GST Council meeting. *—PTI*

Plea seeks FIR over Sonia's voter role entry before citizenship

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

A plea on Tuesday sought action against Congress leader Sonia Gandhi alleging her name was included in the electoral rolls three years before she became an Indian citizen in 1983.

The application before the additional chief judicial magistrate has sought directions to police for investigation into the allegation

Senior advocate Pavan Narang appearing for the complainant, Vikas Tripathi said that her name was included in the electoral roll as a voter of the New Delhi constituency in 1980, which was deleted in 1982, and again re-entered in 1983 after she acquired Indian citizenship.

The reason for the deletion is nowhere to be found, he said.

He claimed there was "some forgery" and that a public authority had been "cheated."

"My limited request is either direct the police to register an FIR under appropriate sections...," Narang said. A notice could be issued to police to file a status report. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

EC issues notice to Khera's wife for having 2 voter IDs

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday accused Kota Neelima, wife of Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera, of holding two voter identity cards in her name. The allegation surfaced a day after the Election Commission issued a notice to Khera for allegedly registering himself in the electoral rolls of more than one constituency.

BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya claimed that Neelima possesses two active EPIC numbers one from Khairatabad in Telangana and another from New Delhi. He alleged that this exposed the "duplicity" of the Congress party, which has been campaigning under Rahul Gandhi's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' banner.

Malviya said the Congress' much-publicised 'Mohabbat Ki Dukan' initiative was "nothing but a market of fakeness and fraud", accusing the party of misleading voters while violating electoral norms. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Tariffs may break India-US ties: Trump critic

NEW YORK, 4 SEPT

Prominent US Democrat Rep Gregory Meeks has voiced concerns about President Donald Trump's "arbitrary tariffs" imposed on India, stating they "threaten" the important relationship between the two nations. As a key member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Meeks reaffirmed congressional support for the US-India partnership during a meeting with Indian Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

"Met with @AmbVMKwatra to underscore Congress' support for the US-India partnership, which has strengthened over the past 25 years, including through the Quad," Meeks wrote on X handle.

He expressed alarm over the tariffs, which include a 25 per cent duty on India's purchases of Russian oil, emphasising the need for deeper ties and shared aspirations for global peace.

Kwatra reciprocated the support, stating, "Grateful for his constant counsel... Our discussion spanned over issues like trade, energy, Indo-Pacific, and broader issues of mutual interest." *—PTI*

HC overturns civil court ruling on EPS' election

CHENNAI, 4 SEPT

The Madras High Court has overturned a lower court's decision that dismissed an application from former Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, seeking to reject a petition that challenged his election as general secretary of the AIADMK.

The challenge was initiated by Suryamoorthy of Dindigul, who purports to be affiliated with the AIADMK. He filed a case in the Chennai Civil Court contesting Palaniswami's appointment as party chief at a general council meeting on 11 July 2022.

Previously, the civil court had dismissed Palaniswami's petition for the dismissal of Suryamoorthy's case. However, on Thursday, Justice PB Balaji not only quashed the lower court's ruling but also dismissed Suryamoorthy's case, stating during the trial that "a person who was not a AIADMK member cannot raise questions about party matters. -—*PTI*

K'TAKA TOPS THE LIST

'47% of ministers face criminal charges'

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Nearly 47 per cent of ministers in the country have declared criminal cases against themselves, including serious charges such as murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women, according to an analysis of poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The report came days after the Centre introduced three bills that sought the removal of prime minister, chief ministers, and ministers arrested for 30 days on serious criminal charges.

ADR examined self-sworn affidavits of 643 ministers from 27 state assemblies, three Union Territories and the Union Council of Ministers, and found that 302 ministers, or 47 per cent of the total, have criminal cases against them.

Of these 302 ministers, 174 face serious criminal cases, the report stated.

According to the analysis, of 336 BJP ministers, 136 declared criminal cases against themselves, and 88 are facing serious charges.

The Congress, which is in power in four states, had 45 ministers with criminal cases, including 18 with serious offences.

Of 31 DMK ministers, 27 face criminal charges, while 14 face serious cases. The Trinamool Congress too had 13 of its 40 ministers with criminal cases, including 8 with serious charges.

The Telugu Desam Party had the highest proportion, with 22 of its 23 ministers declaring criminal cases and 13 of them booked for serious offences. Among AAP ministers, 11 of 16 face criminal cases, while five are facing serious ones.

At the national level, 29 of the 72 Union ministers declared criminal cases in their affidavits.

Out of the 30 Assemblies, 11 have billionaire ministers. Karnataka leads with the highest at eight billionaire ministers. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI

- The Telugu Desam Party had the highest proportion, with 22 of its 23 ministers declaring criminal cases and 13 of them booked for serious offences. Among AAP ministers, 11 of 16 face criminal cases. 29 of 27 the Union Ministers have criminal cases against them.

Rat bite: Doctor says baby died due to infection

INDORE, 4 SEPT

The hospital administration of the Maharaja Yashwantrao Hospital (MYH) in Indoor claimed on Thursday that the death of a new-born on Wednesday was caused by a blood infection, not the rat bite. The family received her body without a post-mortem. Another newborn girl died due to alleged rat bites in the hospital recently. In response to the public uproar, the authorities have suspended several staff members of the hospital and issued a show cause notice to Brajesh Lahoti, head of the paediatric surgery department, for alleged negligence. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav emphasised that the government would not tolerate any negligence in public health. Hospital authorities said the infants had congenital ailments. *—PTI*

2 in Indore sacked over Muslim name on road signboards

INDORE, 4 SEPT

The Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) has suspended two employees and terminated another for allegedly installing signboards with altered street names in a Muslim-dominated area, an official said. Municipal Commissioner Shivam Verma took action following Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargav's instructions after receiving a probe report. The IMC removed five signboards in Chandan Nagar on 21 August after former BJP MLA Akash Vijayvargiya complained that roads had been renamed based on a "particular religion". An executive engineer and a sub-engineer were suspended, while another sub-engineer's services were terminated. The additional commissioner overseeing the department was also replaced. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Bhojpuri actor Pawan Singh booked for fraud

VARANASI, 4 SEPT

An FIR has been registered against Bhojpuri actor-singer Pawan Singh and three others on charges of cheating and criminal intimidation, police said on Thursday. The case was filed following a court order after Varanasi businessman Vishal Singh alleged he was duped into investing in the Bhojpuri film "Boss" (2018). According to the complaint, Vishal met director Prem Shankar Rai in 2017 and was introduced to Pawan Singh and others. Promised a 50 per cent profit share, he invested Rs 32.6 lakh initially and later an additional Rs 1.25 crore as a co-producer. However, he claims he received neither profits nor a refund. When he demanded his dues, Singh allegedly threatened him. *—PTI*

32 get bail in 35-yr-old UP caste violence case

PRAYAGRAJ, 4 SEPT

The Allahabad High Court has granted bail to 32 individuals convicted in a 35-year-old caste violence case in Agra. Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav issued the order on 28 August while hearing an appeal filed by Jaidev and 31 others, who were sentenced to five years in prison by an Agra court on 28 May. Counsel for the appellants argued that they were falsely implicated and highlighted contradictions in statements given by various witnesses druing the trial. Many are over 65 and suffer from ailments. The counsel noted, "All have been in jail since 28 May, 2025," and emphasised that they did not misuse their bail during the trial. The court observed that "the final disposal of the appeal may take some time" and permitted their release without commenting on the merits of the case. *—PTI*

Rain havoc: Kashmir cut off, Delhi drowns

Red and orange alerts were sounded in Delhi-NCR; Relief camps flooded, residents moved

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

People wade through a flooded area on a tractor, in Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir; Some people use a boat as others risk their lives walking through a flooded Monastery Market as the Yamuna river continues to flow in spate in New Delhi on Thursday

PHOTOS: PTI

The Kashmir valley was cut off from the rest of the country as all surface links, including the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, were closed for traffic on Thursday due to multiple landslides.

Incessant and torrential rains battered the northern states on Thursday, with Himachal Pradesh reeling under the natural disaster ever since the onset of monsoon and Delhi getting impacted due to the rising water levels of the Yamuna river.

Educational institutions have been shut down, normal life has been adversely affected and business has come to a standstill due to the heavy rains and flood-like situation in states such as Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh.

Two houses collapsed following a landslide in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district on Thursday, leaving one person dead and six more buried under the rubble, officials said.

A team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) rescued three people, including a woman, and recovered one body.

Incessant rains in the past three-four days have triggered landslides at several places in Kullu even as rains continue to obstruct the rescue work. A total of 1,292 roads are closed in the state.

The local Met office has issued a yellow alert for thunderstorms and lightning in isolated places in the state on Friday and Saturday.

Since the onset of monsoon in Himachal on 20 June, the state has witnessed 95 flash floods, 45 cloudbursts and 127 major landslide incidents.

At least 343 people have died in rain-related incidents and road accidents, while 43 are missing.

The state has suffered losses to the tune of Rs 3,690 crore.

Rail traffic has remained suspended in the Jammu railway division for the past nine days.

The water level in the Yamuna at Delhi's Old Railway Bridge remained steady at 207.46 metres between 11 am and 12 noon on Thursday, officials said.

Floodwaters reached near Delhi Secretariat, which houses the offices of the chief minister, cabinet ministers and key bureaucrats. Floodwaters also reached the Shri Marghat Wale Hanuman Baba Mandir near Kashmere Gate.

"Every year, when the water level of the Yamuna rises, it bathes the idol of Lord Hanuman. This is holy water. We revere it," said a devotee.

It was a double whammy for Delhiites, as waterlogging caused by incessant rain over the past couple of days, combined with Yamuna flooding, led to major traffic snarls.

According to the revenue department, 8,018 people have been moved to tents, while 2,030 have been shifted to 13 permanent shelters.

Punjab is currently facing one of its worst flood disasters in decades. The floods are a result of swollen rivers, the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi, along with seasonal rivulets.

The deluge has claimed 37 lives so far and impacted over 3.55 lakh people. *—PTI*

MONEY LAUNDERING

Dhawan appears before ED in illegal betting case

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Former Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan arrived at the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office in central Delhi at around 11am on Thursday, where he was questioned regarding an alleged money laundering case linked to an illegal betting application named 1xBet.

Official sources reported that the agency recorded his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) as part of the investigation. The 39-year-old former India opener is believed to be associated with the app through various endorsements.

The ED is investigating numerous cases involving illegal betting apps that have defrauded investors of crores and evaded substantial tax liabilities. Former cricketer Suresh Raina was also interrogated.

The Indian market for online betting apps is valued at over USD 100 billion and features 22 crore users. *—PTI*

1 killed, 14 hurt in blast at M'rashtra explosives unit

NAGPUR, 4 SEPT

A devastating blast at an explosives factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district shortly after midnight has resulted in one fatality and injuries to 14, according to police reports. The explosion, which occurred around 12.30am at the Solar Group facility in Bazargaon, caused the entire building to collapse.

A 25-year-old man was confirmed dead, while seven individuals are currently in the ICU and others suffered minor injuries. "Before the blast, there were indications (of an explosion) following which people left the plant," said Ashish Kumar Srivastava, the company's Senior General Manager, noting that safety procedures were activated post-blast.

An investigation by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) will determine the cause. Former state home minister Anil Deshmukh urged stricter safety measures for explosive manufacturers. *—PTI*

SC takes note as police stns lack CCTV

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

PHOTO: AI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed registration of a suo motu public interest litigation over lack of functional CCTVs in police stations after taking cognisance of a media report.

The apex court had in 2018 ordered installation of CCTV cameras in police stations to check human rights abuses.

On Thursday, the court referred to the media report and said, "...we are directing for registration of a suo motu public interest litigation titled 'lack of functional CCTVs in police stations' as it has been reported that there are about 11 deaths in the last seven-eight months of this year in police custody".

In December 2020, the top court had directed the Centre to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies, including the CBI, the ED and the National Investigation Agency.

It had said that states and Union Territories should ensure that CCTV cameras were installed at each and every police station, at all entry and exit points, main gate, lock-ups, corridors, lobby and reception as also areas outside the lock-up rooms so that no part was left uncovered.

It had said that CCTV systems must be equipped with night vision and have audio as well as video footage and it shall be mandatory for the Centre, states and UTs to purchase such systems which allow storage of data for at least one year. *—PTI*

SC to hear on law on online gaming

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Centre has sought the transfer of pleas challenging the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 from three high courts to the Supreme Court to avoid conflicting verdicts.

The court will hear the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)'s plea next week.

The Centre sought a "stay of all proceedings in the writ petitions" in different high courts till the transfer petition was disposed of.

After the law got President's assent, multiple petitions were filed in the high courts challenging the Act's validity. It prohibits offering or playing online money games, regardless of whether they are games of skill or chance. *—PTI*

SC denies bail to separatist leader in terror funding

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to grant interim bail to Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah in a terror funding case. The court sought the NIA's response within two weeks on Shah's plea challenging the Delhi High Court's denial of bail. Arrested in 2019, Shah faces allegations of hawala funding, inciting separatism, and facilitating militant activities. The High Court had also rejected his request for house arrest. *—PTI*

SC grants bail to social media influencer in rape case

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to a 23-year-old social media influencer accused of raping a 40-year-old woman, noting possible false and frivolous charges. The court observed the complainant's repeated absence despite notice and considered the defence's claim of a consensual relationship. Earlier, the court questioned Delhi Police for invoking rape charges, highlighting their voluntary travel together. The Delhi High Court had earlier denied him bail. *—PTI*

ACHIEVING A FEAT

Indian-American to head NASA as associate administrator

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 4 SEPT

Amit Kdhatriya joined NASA in 2003

PHOTO: X/ Amit Kshatriya

A decorated Indian-American Amit Kshatriya has been named as NASA's new 'exploration-focussed' associate administrator, the US space agency said.

Kshatriya, a 20-year NASA veteran, was the deputy in charge of the Moon to Mars Programme in the Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD) at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) headquarters in Washington.

Born in Wisconsin to Indian immigrant parents, educated at California Institute of Technology (CalTech) and the University of Texas at Austin, Kshatriya is one of only about 100 people in history to serve as a mission control flight director.

Joining NASA in 2003, Kshatriya was decorated with the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal and Silver Snoopy for actions such as the lead flight director for the 50th expedition to the space station.

In his new role, he serves as the highest-ranking civil servant at the agency, and as a senior advisor to acting NASA administrator Sean P Duffy

Kshatriya is the agency's chief operating officer, leading the agency's 10 centre directors the mission directorate associate administrators at NASA headquarters.

"Amit's knowledge, integrity, and unwavering commitment to pioneering a new era of exploration make him uniquely qualified to lead our agency as associate administrator. With Amit we'll continue to push the boundaries of what's possible," Duffy said.

Kshatriya's promotion also signals how the Trump Administration sees the commercial space sector as an American economic engine. NASA is set to partner even more closely with America's booming space industry and grow the space economy.

He and his wife have three children. *—PTI*

- Amit Kahatriya was born in Wisconsin to Indian immigrant parents, educated at California Institute of Technology (CalTech) and the University of Texas at Austin.

India, Singapore to fast-track bilateral trade agreements

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 4 SEPT

Singaporean Prime MInister Lawrence Wong with Prime Minister Nadendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday

PHOTO: X

India and Singapore have decided to fast-track the review of theirComprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) and Asean Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) to accelerate bilateral trade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday during a meeting with Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.

This is Wong's maiden visit to India after he assumed office last year.

The decision comes at a time when new US tariff regime is reshaping global trade flow. India with 50% tariff sought to diversify its markets and strengthen regional economic partnerships to offset the adverse impact. The country has identified 50 markets so far.

Singapore is India's largest trading partner in South-East Asia and a key investor, making the CECA review vital.

Modi said that the partnership would cover advanced manufacturing, green shipping, skilling, civil nuclear cooperation, and urban water management.

The partnership on semiconductors boosted research and development, with Singaporean firms taking part in India's Semicon conference. An agreement on digital asset innovation between the Reserve Bank of India and the Monetary Authority of Singapore is one of them.

t clearances.

He also inaugurated phase-2 of the Bharat Mumbai Container Terminal, built by Singapore's PSA International, which will expand India's container-handling capacity.

Singapore will also support setting up of a National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Chennai to train manpower in advanced manufacturing. "We share common concerns on terrorism," Modi said. "We believe that fighting against terrorism with unity is the duty of all countries which believe in humanity," he added.

Wong said in a world marked by uncertainty and turbulence, the partnership is important. *—PTI/Agencies*

HURRAY TO TEACHERS!

Radhakrishnan: The teacher who guided the nation

Today, India celebrates Teacher's Day, a tribute to one of its greatest educators and leaders — Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Born on 5 September, 1888, Radhakrishnan was not only the second President of India but also a revered philosopher, academic, and defender of Indian culture and education. His birthday has been commemorated as Teacher's Day since he requested that his personal celebration be transformed into a day that honours the invaluable contributions of teachers across the nation. Became Vice President of India (1952–1962) and later the second President of India (1962–1967). He believed that teachers play a vital role in building the character of students and society.

Knowledge gives us power, love gives us fullness

The end-product of education should be a free, creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature

Books are the way in which we bridge culture

A HUMBLE BEGINNING

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan hailed from a Telugu Brahmin family in Tiruttani, Tamil Nadu. It is said his father wanted him to become a priest and not study English. Radhakrishnan was eventually sent to a school in Thirupati. Despite financial constraints, his intellectual brilliance shone early, leading him to study philosophy at Madras Christian College, a path chosen more by circumstance than design.

His academic journey culminated in professorships at some of India's most prestigious institutions and later at the University of Oxford, where he held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religion and Ethics.

Radhakrishnan was a prolific writer and thinker who passionately reinterpreted Advaita Vedanta philosophy for modern times.

A BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

As a scholar, diplomat, and statesman, Radhakrishnan played a vital role in bridging the cultural and philosophical divide between India and the Western world. His tenure as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, and later as Vice-President and President of India underscored his commitment to education and international understanding. He believed deeply that "teachers should be the best minds in the country," a conviction that has inspired generations of educators and students alike.

THE BIRTH OF TEACHER'S DAY

When some of Radhakrishnan's students and admirers wanted to celebrate his birthday, he humbly suggested turning the occasion into a day to honor teachers nationwide. Since then, September 5 is dedicated to recognizing the pivotal role teachers play in shaping minds and society. Every year, Teachers' Day is celebrated in India on September 5 on the birth anniversary of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a renowned scholar and the former President of India. On his birth anniversary, let us remember some of his most inspiring statements that are still relevant for today's times. —*Salar News*

Lincoln's letter to his son's teacher

In honor of Teacher's Day, **Salar News** revisits a timeless piece of wisdom, a letter penned by former US president Abraham Lincoln to his son's teacher.

My son starts school today. It is all going to be strange and new to him for a while, and I wish you would treat him gently.

It is an adventure that might take him across continents. All adventures probably include wars, tragedy, and sorrow. To live this life will require faith, love, and courage.

So dear Teacher, will you please take him by his hand and teach him things he will have to know, teaching him — but gently, if you can.

Teach him that for every enemy, there is a friend. He will have to know that all men are not just, that all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, that for every crooked politician, there is a dedicated leader.

Teach him if you can that 10 cents earned is of far more value than a dollar found. In school, teacher, it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat.

Teach him to learn how to gracefully lose and enjoy winning when he does win.

Teach him to be gentle with people, tough with tough people. Steer him away from envy if you can and teach him the secret of quiet laughter.

Teach him if you can — how to laugh when he is sad, teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him there can be glory in failure and despair in success. Teach him to scoff at cynics.

Teach him if you can the wonders of books, but also give time to ponder the extreme mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and flowers on a green hill.

Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is doing it. Teach him to listen to everyone, but teach him also to filter all that he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him to sell his talents and brains to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul.

Let him have the courage to be impatient, let him have the patience to be brave.

Teach him to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind, in God.

This is the order, teacher, but see what best you can do. He is such a nice little boy, and he is my son.

SALAR

Who will give us books again, ask students in flooded Delhi

As the Yamuna River swelled to 207.445 metres on Wednesday afternoon, parts of Delhi were submerged in floodwaters for the second time in just over a year. For thousands of families, the devastation is more than just water damage, it is the drowning of routines, stability, and for many schoolchildren, the risk of losing an academic year.

In the flood-hit neighbourhoods of Yamuna Khadar, Mayur Vihar, Geeta Colony and beyond, the scene is grim. Wet schoolbooks are spread out on makeshift cots to dry. Uniforms hang from ropes strung across trees. Children clutch half-dried notebooks, salvaged from flooded homes, as they attempt to prepare for upcoming exams with little more than memory and borrowed materials.

For students like Anuradha, a Class 11 student from Yamuna Khadar, the timing could not be worse. "I lost many of my books, notebooks and stationery. In the middle of the year, who would provide us with all these things again?" she asked, sitting on a broken plastic chair in her pink school dress, flipping through a water-stained book. She now borrows textbooks from classmates and spends her evenings painstakingly copying lost notes. Manvi, a Class 10 student from Mayur Vihar Phase 1, fears she will miss her mid-semester exams altogether. "All my notes and books with the syllabus are gone. Even my school uniform is missing. How can I go to school like this?" she said. "Until I get another set of books and a uniform, I don't think I'll be able to attend classes."

In one flooded household, Geeta Madan carefully balanced her son Sahil's damp school shirt on a steel plate over a gas stove. She hopes it will dry in time for his afternoon shift. "Whatever the situation, I will send them to school. If I have to wash and dry the same uniform every day, so be it," she said. Her determination reflects the resolve of many parents unwilling to let the floods disrupt their children's education.

Outside the relief tents, eight-year-old Ankush rides a small bicycle through narrow muddy lanes, wearing a school shirt with pyjama bottoms. "My clothes are dirty. My mom said I should wear the school shirt until the rest dries," he said, smiling shyly. Like him, many children have not returned to school in days, either due to the waterlogged conditions or the lack of clean clothes.

For daily wage earners like Ramesh Kumar, the worry is long-term. His daughter, in Class 9, has also lost her school materials. "Education is the only way forward for her. If she misses classes and exams now, it will affect her whole year. I can find a way to buy food, but books and uniforms are a different challenge," he said. The situation worsened as the Yamuna's water level reached 207.41 metres again by 9pm, marking one of the highest recorded floods in the capital's history. The only other occasions it breached the 207-metre mark were in 1978, 2023 and now, in 2025.

Residential and commercial areas including Yamuna Bazar, Geeta Colony, Majnu Ka Tila, Kashmiri Gate, Garhi Mandu and Mayur Vihar are submerged. Families from low-lying areas have been evacuated to temporary relief camps, where survival takes precedence over schooling. "We have moved to these tents for now as our homes are submerged in water. This is just like the 2023 floods," said Rekha Chaturvedi, a 55-year-old resident of Nigambodh Ghat. India's Himalayan states—Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir—along with Punjab have also been severely affected by similar flooding and heavy rainfall. Delhi, already under pressure from rapid urbanisation and unplanned development, remains particularly vulnerable.

Climate experts point to human-induced climate change as a major driver of the escalating crisis. "We are living in a warmer world, nearly 1.5 degrees hotter than pre-industrial times," said Anjal Prakash, professor at the Indian School of Business and a contributing author to multiple UN climate reports. "The intensity and frequency of extreme rainfall events will only increase. This is the new normal."

Erratic monsoon patterns, once predictable, now bring bursts of intense rain followed by prolonged dry spells. South Asia, one of the world's most densely populated regions, is also among the most vulnerable to climate-related disasters. "Rapid urbanisation, deforestation and poorly planned infrastructure are making the floods worse," Prakash added. With climate models projecting more extreme weather events, the need for robust disaster preparedness, flood-resilient housing and support for vulnerable communities has never been more urgent. For the children of Delhi's flood-hit zones, though, the crisis is painfully immediate. With exams looming, many are forced to choose between salvaging the remains of their education or simply getting through another day without dry clothes, clean water or a roof over their heads. —*PTI*

Several areas in Delhi are submerged as the Yamuna River swells to 207.445m and continues to rise on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Women farmers strive hard to make Kerala self-reliant for Onam

- The sun beats down on a one-acre plot at the edge of Attappadi, a tribal village in Kerala's northern Palakkad district.

The sun beats down on a one-acre plot at the edge of Attappadi, a tribal village in Kerala's northern Palakkad district.

Here, Maruthi is hard at work, moving through rows of vibrant jamanthi and vadamulla- -marigold and globe amaranth- -her hands swiftly gathering the bright blossoms.

Nearby, a group of local flower merchants wait patiently, watching as Maruthi and her friends fill sack after sack with the freshly picked flowers. "We used to send our flowers to the market in Coimbatore," Maruthi said, pausing for a moment.

"But now, with Onam here, it's become a challenge to keep up. The local vendors are coming straight to the farm to buy, the demand is that high," she told PTI.

Maruthi is one of the hundreds of women who play a key role in the crores of rupees of the Onam market in Kerala.

Their work is helping put the state on a path towards self-reliance, supplying a significant portion of the flowers, vegetables, and fruit needed for the harvest festival.

They are part of Kudumbashree, a government-backed poverty eradication mission made up entirely of women.

With 48 lakh members across the state, this network has made a major intervention in the festival markets through its diverse initiatives.

Thousands of Joint Liability Groups of Kudumbashree have carried out vegetable and flower farming on a massive scale across Kerala, reducing its immense dependency upon neighbouring states, especially Tamil Nadu, to a great extent.

According to figures, a total of 13,879 Kudumbashree JLGs, comprising four to 10 women, have indulged in vegetable farming in 8,913.13 acres of land across Kerala, eyeing the Onam market.

Flower farming has been carried out on 1,820.52 acres of land under the aegis of 4,531 groups in the state ahead of the harvest festival, it said.

The state government has set aside Rs 14 crore to support Kudumbashree initiatives this year by giving them incentives and interest-free loans.

In Attappadi alone, the all-women network carried out vegetable farming in 25 acres and flower farming in six acres this year, authorities said.

Marigold, Jasmine, globe amaranth, lotus and so on were among the major flowers harvested by Kudumbashree members targeting the huge demand for the preparation of "pookkalam" (floral carpet).

Long beans, okra, tomato, green chilli, bitter gourd, pumpkin, ash gourd and bottle gourd were among the major vegetables grown by them.

Marigold, Jasmine, globe amaranth, lotus and so on were among the major flowers harvested by Kudumbashree members targeting the huge demand for the preparation of 'pookkalam' **PHOTO: PTI**

"Harvesting is still continuing. We got really good profit through flower farming this year. We are getting up to Rs 150 for one kilogram of jamanthi," Maruthi said in a Tamil-tinged Malayalam.

Radha V, who is carrying out plantain farming in Bedadukka village in Kasaragod, said they are struggling hard to meet the huge demand for "vazhayila" (plantain leaves for serving sadya) and "vazhakkula" (banana) during the Onam season.

"We are getting bulk orders from local shops, supermarkets and auditoriums. Vendors used to pre-book their orders. The demand for plantain leaves is very high these days, as people largely prefer them to plastic leaves for sadya," she told PTI.

State minister for Local Self-Government (LSGD) M B Rajesh said Kudumbashree could remarkably increase the area of flower and vegetable farming to more acres this Onam season and thus play a key role in the market.

Besides this, Kudumbashree's new initiatives like "onasadya" (feast being prepared as per demand), "onam kits" (containing chips, payasam mixes, spice powders, and other ingredients) and "gift hampers" (curated boxes comprising various products related to onam) are a huge hit among people, he said.

"The 50,000 kits and 5,000 hampers have been sold like hotcakes. The bookings for Kudumbashree's readymade Onasadya are soaring. As many as 2000 Onam fairs were organised to sell vegetables and various other products," Rajesh told PTI.

Noting that Kudumbashree has evolved into a credible brand in the state through these years, he said the network is playing a key role in the state's journey to become self-reliant in various areas.

"They have made strong interventions in the market during the Onam season. It has helped to regulate the price, especially that of vegetables and flowers," the minister added.

According to H Dineshan, Executive Director of Kudumbashree, the network is providing pesticide-free vegetables for preparing the delicious Onam sadya feast, alongside vibrant, locally grown flowers to adorn traditional pookalams.

"This festive initiative ensures safe and fresh choices for households while reflecting the prosperity, resilience, and sustainability led by women across Kerala," he added.

Among other products, the Kudumbashree also brought out coconut oil, banana chips, pickles, flours, curry powders and so on.

A total of Rs 30 crore in returns is expected through various Kudumbashree initiatives during the season, including Rs 12-15 crore through vegetable and flower sales alone, authorities said.

High-quality saplings of vegetables and flowers were made available through Krishi Bhavans and the organic nurseries of Kudumbashree, they added. The auspicious "Thiruvonam" falls on 5 September this year. —*PTI*

Iconic Lisbon streetcar crashes, kills 17 people

LISBON, 4 SEPT

A picturesque electric streetcar that is one of Lisbon's big tourist attractions derailed Wednesday, killing 17 people and injuring several others, emergency services said. Another 21 people were injured in Wednesday's crash, she said. The 19th-century streetcar is one of Lisbon's big tourist attractions. The yellow-and-white streetcar, known as Elevador da Gloria, was lying on its side on the narrow road that it travels on, its sides and top crumpled. It crashed into a building where the road bends, leaving parts of the mostly metal vehicle crushed. Officials declined to speculate on whether a faulty brake or a snapped cable may have caused the derailment. Portugal observed a national day of mourning on Thursday to mark one of the capital's worst disaster in recent history. *—PTI*

Over 60 killed as boat capsizes in Nigeria

NIGERIA, 4 SEPT

At least 60 lives have been lost and dozens rescued following the capsising of a boat in Nigeria's north-central Niger State, local officials have reported. The vessel, carrying more than 100 passengers, left Tungan Sule in Malale district at around 11am local time on Tuesday, heading towards Dugga on Nigeria's Kainji reservoir. The Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) stated the accident was caused by the vessel striking a submerged tree stump near the Gausawa community in Borgu Local Government Area. NSEMA's director general, Abdullahi Baba Ara, said that the death toll is still rising. District head Sa'adu Inuwa Muhammad noted that women and children constituted the majority of the deceased. *—Agencies*

Kim to meet Xi Jinping in Beijing

BEIJING, 4 SEPT

China's Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is set to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. No specific details regarding the timing of their meeting have been disclosed. Kim attended a significant military parade in Beijing on Wednesday, which saw the presence of other foreign leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. This marks a rare occasion where Kim has ventured outside of North Korea. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun stated that the two leaders would engage in "in-depth exchanges of views on bilateral and issues of mutual concern." He noted that Kim's participation in the parade and the upcoming discussions with Xi "carry great significance." *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Jamaica's Holness wins third term as Prime Minister

KINGSTON, 4 SEPT

Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness has secured a third term following a closely contested election marred by corruption and economic anxieties. Preliminary results indicate his Jamaica Labour Party won at least 34 seats, while Mark Golding's opposition People's National Party claimed 29. Golding conceded, expressing disappointment but acknowledging Holness's victory: "This is not an easy speech to make." Voter turnout was significantly low at 38.8 per cent. Despite a 43 per cent decrease in crime this year, concerns over socioeconomic challenges persist. Holness pledged to double the minimum wage, though this was met with criticism from business groups. *—PTI*

Trump says trade deals will be undone if tariffs are made illegal

WASHINGTON, 4 SEPT

The Trump administration took the fight over tariffs to the Supreme Court on Wednesday, asking the justices to rule quickly that the President has the power to impose sweeping import taxes under federal law. Trump said that if the tariffs were deemed illegal, all his trade deals would fall apart.

The government called on the court to reverse an appeals court ruling that found most of President Donald Trump's tariffs are an illegal use of an emergency powers law.

It's the latest in a series of Trump administration appeals to a Supreme Court he shaped.

The US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit left the tariffs in place for now, but the administration nevertheless called on the high court to intervene quickly in a petition filed electronically late Wednesday. It was expected to be formally docketed on Thursday.

Solicitor General D John Sauer asked the justices to hear arguments in November.

Trump warned that if the decision went against his government, several of the recent trade deals would be undone.

"We made a deal with the European Union where they're paying us almost a trillion dollars. And you know what? They're happy. It's done. These deals are all done," he said. "I guess we'd have to unwind them." *—Agencies*

Potus urges Supreme Court to hear the matter urgently

Don to host tech CEOs at WH; Musk not invited

Trump will host a high-powered list of tech CEOs for a dinner at the White House on Thursday. The guest list includes Apple CEO Tim Cook; Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg; Google CEO Sundar Pichai; Microsoft cofounder Bill Gates and CEO Satya Nadella; OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and the heads of Oracle and Palantir among other. However, one absence from the guest list is Elon Musk.

Rubio, Mexican Prez agree to boost security

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum as the two nations agreed to keep collaborating on cross-border security, including fighting the trafficking of drugs, guns and fuel, but made clear it would be done from their respective sides of the border. Rubio also defended the US' strike on a Venezuelan ship, saying "What will stop them is when you blow them up".

Trump plans to send Nat'l Guard to New Orleans next

Trump suggested that New Orleans would be his next target for deploying the National Guard. Trump has already said he plans to send the National Guard into Chicago and Baltimore following him deploying troops and federal agents to patrol Washington, DC, last month. He has repeatedly targeted Democrat-governed areas, making New Orleans an interesting case: it is a blue city in a red state.

Judge orders govt to restore Harvard's $2.6B funding

BOSTON, 4 SEPT

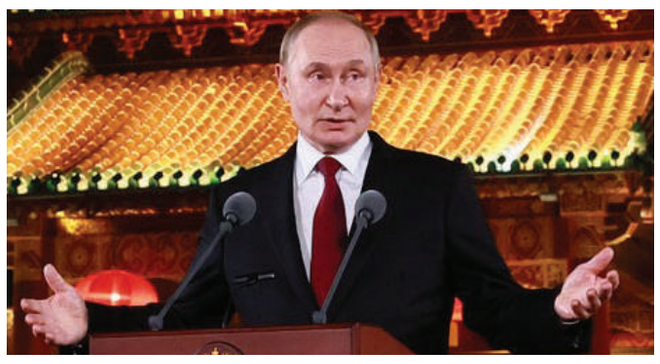
A federal judge in Boston on Wednesday ordered the Trump administration to reverse its cuts of more than $2.6 billion in research funding for Harvard University, delivering a significant victory to the Ivy League school in its battle with the White House.

US District Judge Allison Burroughs ruled the cuts amounted to illegal retaliation for Harvard's rejection of the Trump administration's demands for changes to Harvard's governance and policies.

The government had tied the funding freezes to Harvard's delays in dealing with antisemitism, but the judge said the university's federally backed research had little connection to discrimination against Jews.

"A review of the administrative record makes it difficult to conclude anything other than that (the government) used antisemitism as a smokescreen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities," Burroughs wrote.

The restoration of federal money would revive Harvard's sprawling research operation and hundreds of projects that sustained cuts. But whether Harvard actually receives the federal money remains to be seen. *—PTI*



Russian President Vladimir Putin PHOTO: KREMLIN

Can't talk to India, China like that: Putin to EU, Trump

BEIJING, 4 SEPT

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Europe's plans to sanction Moscow's economic partners, such as India and China, reflected their colonial mindset. He said that European leaders cannot speak to India and China in terms of "punishment" for exercising their sovereignty.

"You have countries like India, with almost 1.5 billion people, China, with powerful economies, but they also have their own domestic political mechanisms and laws," he said after his four-day visit to China on Wednesday. "So when somebody tells you that they're going to punish you, you have to think how can the leadership of those countries, which had difficult periods in their history too, that had to do with colonialism, with attacks on their sovereignty during prolonged periods of time, you have to understand that if one of them shows weakness, his political career will be over, so that influences his behaviour."

"Just as the colonial era is now over, they (European leaders) have to realise that they cannot use this term in speaking with their partners," Putin stated.

Putin claimed that the Ukraine conflict barely came up during his China visit.

The Russian leader argued that the true reason behind many of these sanctions lies in growing economic imbalances between the West, particularly the US, and other major economies like India, China, and Brazil. "So what does Ukraine have to do with this? Nothing. It's only about domestic politics."

Putin also called for "multipolar" world order, rejecting the current "unipolar" structure and "hegemon". *—ANI*

Afghan quake toll touches 2,200, says Taliban

KABUL, 4 SEPT

Hundreds of bodies have been recovered from houses destroyed by a major earthquake in Afghanistan last week, pushing the death toll to over 2,200, a Taliban government spokesman said Thursday.

A 6.0 magnitude quake struck several provinces of the mountainous and remote east on Sunday night, levelling villages and trapping people under rubble.

The majority of casualties have been in Kunar, where many live in steep river valleys.

Taliban spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat, said rescue and search efforts were continuing. "Tents have been set up for people, and the delivery of first aid and emergency supplies is ongoing."

Rough terrain and funding cuts are hindering rescue and relief efforts, with aid agencies urging the international community to come forward with more support

While some nations have pledged financial assistance, including £1 million (USD 1.3 million) from the United Kingdom and USD 1 million from South Korea, many traditional donor countries have yet to respond. *—PTI*

26 countries pledge to send troops to Ukraine, says Macron

PARIS, 4 SEPT

French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday that 26 of Ukraine's allies have pledged to deploy troops as a "reassurance force" for the war-torn country once fighting ends in the conflict with Russia.

Speaking after a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing in Paris, Macron said the countries had committed to deploying troops in Ukraine — or to maintaining a presence on land, at sea, or in the air — to help guarantee the country's security the day after a ceasefire or peace is achieved.

He added that "this force does not seek to wage any war on Russia".

Macron did not say which countries had agreed to provide troops but France and Britain are among those that have indicated a willingness. Germany said that it would deploy troops on the condition that the US pledged similar support. Macron said that there is "no doubt" about the US' support.

Macron and other European leaders met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the US Envoy Steve Witkoff on Thursday, to discuss ways of ensuring long-term military support and continued American backing for Ukraine once the conflict ends.

Zelenskyy's office said he also held a closed-door meeting with Witkoff.

The European leaders — some of whom joined the meeting virtually — said Russia must now work toward ending the fighting.

Macron said that Europe would impose new sanctions on Russia – "in collaboration with the US" – should Moscow continue to refuse a peace deal.

Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who lead the group, have insisted that any European "reassurance" force in Ukraine needs the backing of the US.

American support for the Europe-sponsored security guarantees would be finalised "in the coming days," Macron added.

"I think that today, for the first time in a long time, this is the first such serious concrete step," Zelenskyy said.

The European leaders also later spoke by phone with US President Donald Trump, although it is unclear what the outcome of the conversation was at the time of publishing.

Starmer "emphasised that the group had an unbreakable pledge to Ukraine, with Trump's backing, and it was clear they now needed to go even further to apply pressure on Putin to secure a cessation of hostilities."

Starmer's office also mentioned a decision from the Coalition to supply long-range missiles to Ukraine "to further bolster the country's supplies."

Moscow and Russian President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly warned against any foreign deployment of troops in the war, despite itself enlisting troops from several nations, including North Korea.

—Salar News with Agencies

French President Emmanuel Macron greets hist Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy ahead of the Coalition of the Willing meeting on Thursday PHOTO: X @EMMANUELMACRON

REVERED ICON

Fashion visionary Armani dies at 91

COLOMBO, 4 SEPT

Giorgio Armani, the Italian designer who turned the concept of understated elegance into a multibillion-dollar fashion empire, has died, his fashion house confirmed. He was 91.

Armani, one of the most recognisable names and faces in the global fashion industry, missed Milan Fashion Week in June 2025 for the first time during the previews of Spring-Summer 2026 menswear to recover from an undisclosed condition.

He was planning a major event to celebrate 50 years of his signature Giorgio Armani fashion house during Milan Fashion Week this month.

Starting with an unlined jacket, a simple pair of pants and an urban palette, Armani put Italian ready-to-wear style on the international fashion map in the late 1970s, creating an instantly recognisable relaxed silhouette that has propelled the fashion house for half a century.

Designer Giorgio Armani changed the way people think about fashion PHOTO: PTI

From the executive office to the Hollywood screen, Armani dressed the rich and famous in classic tailored styles, fashioned in super-soft fabrics and muted tones. His handsome black tie outfits and glittering evening gowns often stole the show on award season red carpets.

At the time of his death, Armani had put together an empire worth over $10 billion, which along with clothing included accessories, home furnishings, perfumes, cosmetics, books, flowers and even chocolates, ranking him in the world's top 200 billionaires, according to Forbes.

Armani's fashion vision was that of easygoing elegance where attention to detail made the difference.

"I design for real people. There is no virtue whatsoever in creating clothes and accessories that are not practical," he liked to say when asked to identify his clientele.

Oscar night always sparkled, with smart suiting for the men, and glittering gowns for the ladies. The 2009 best actor winner Sean Penn picked up his statue in a black-on-black Armani outfit, while best actress nominee Anne Hathaway walked the red carpet in a shimmering white strapless evening gown from Armani's latest Prive couture collection. Other longtime devotees included Jodie Foster, George Clooney, Sofia Loren and Brad Pitt. David and Victoria Beckham were the "face" of his 2009 underwear ad campaign.

Armani changed not only how people dressed but how they approached fashion. *—PTI*

Lankan rights body says mass grave may hold extrajudicial bodies

COLOMBO, 4 SEPT

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) said the burials at the Chemmani mass grave in the north were possibly bodies from unlawful and a result of extrajudicial killings.

"Given the positioning of the skeletal remains, including the fact that some remains were in extreme proximity to one another, and the shallow depth of the remains, there is a reasonable likelihood that the burials were unlawful and pursuant to extrajudicial killings," said HRCSL.

Confirming reports that over 200 skeletal remains have been found so far in the excavations, the right body said that over 90 per cent of the human remains found at the site had no form of clothing whatsoever.

PHOTO: X@VINOJANA9

90% of the 200 skeletons had no clothing

The report also flagged "major gaps in expertise and technology available" as well as significant staff shortages.

The report added that the government probe seemed biased and called for an independent investigation. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Market fails to hold on to GST cut gains

Sensex up by just 150 pts; Auto stocks touch 11-months high; insurance stocks dip too

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Stock markets rose for the second consecutive day on Thursday, with the benchmark BSE Sensex closing higher by 150 points after the GST rate cuts announced on commonly used personal items and daily essential products.

Paring most of its gains due to selling in index heavyweight Reliance Industries and Infosys, the 30-share Sensex settled 150.30 points or 0.19 per cent higher at 80,718.01.

The barometer jumped 888.96 points or 1.10 per cent to 81,456.67 in the opening trade, but later slipped from the intra-day high due to profit taking in blue-chips.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended marginally higher by 19.25 points or 0.08 per cent at 24,734.30 after surging 265.7 points or 1.07 per cent to 24,980.75 in opening trade.

However, Maruti Suzuki India, Bharat Electronics, HCL Tech, NTPC, Power Grid, Infosys and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

Additionally, auto stocks ended marginally higher with the exception of Mahindra & Mahindra which climbed nearly 6 per cent, as profit-taking ate away their sharp intraday gains after the GST rate cuts announced on commonly used personal items and daily essential products.

The BSE auto index ended 0.69 per cent higher at 58,129.51.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended marginally higher by 19.25 points or 0.08 per cent at 24,734.30 after surging 265.7 points or 1.07 per cent to 24,980.75 in opening trade.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended marginally higher by 19.25 points or 0.08 per cent at 24,734.30 PHOTO: PTI

Futhermore, FMCG, consumer durables and cement stocks rallied as common use items from hair oil to ice creams and TVs will cost less after the GST Council on Wednesday approved a complete overhaul of the tangled Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.

The BSE FMCG index climbed 0.70 per cent to 21,076.15.

Among consumer durables stocks, Blue Star surged 4.57 per cent, Whirlpool of India climbed 4.19 per cent, Amber Enterprises went up 3.48 per cent, V-Guard Industries advanced 2 per cent, and Havells India (2 per cent).

The BSE Consumer Durables index traded 0.38 per cent up at 62,552.58.

Among cement stocks, Orient Cement rallied 2.97 per cent, UltraTech Cement advanced 2.92 per cent, Shree Cement climbed 2.75 per cent and ACC went up 2.36 per cent.

Cement will cost less with the tax rate coming down from 28 per cent to 18 per cent.

Meanwhile, majority of insurance stocks ended lower on profit-taking after rallying earlier in the day.

At close of trade, shares of Max Financial Services slipped 3.11 per cent, Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company dropped 3.02 per cent, HDFC Life Insurance Company fell by 2.95 per cent, Star Health and Allied Insurance Company declined 1.76 per cent, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company went lower by 1.56 per cent and SBI Life Insurance Company dipped 0.95 per cent on BSE.

However, ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company ended 2.42 per cent higher and Life Insurance Corporation of India climbed 0.78 per cent. —*PTI*

ITC stocks rise despite 40% GST on sin goods

MUMBAI, 4 SEPT

Tobacco stocks experienced a rally on Thursday, 4 September, following Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of a 40 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate on cigarettes, paan masala, gutka, and other tobacco products. Brokerages are optimistic about the move, projecting it to be neutral or even beneficial for tobacco firms. Currently, tobacco products are taxed at a 28 per cent GST plus additional cess, resulting in a total tax burden of approximately 50-55 per cent of the MRP. At 10am shares of ITC, VST Industries, and Godfrey Phillips India rose between 1-4 per cent. Analysts from Jefferies noted that if no further levies are introduced alongside the new GST rate, it would be advantageous for the sector. —***AGENCIES***

Gold drops by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.06L/10g

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Gold prices retreated from record highs by plunging Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,06,070 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday, as traders booked profits in tandem with a weak trend in global markets. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,07,070 per 10g, its all-time high level on Wednesday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also witnessed a pullback, depreciating Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,05,200 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday. It had closed at Rs 1,06,200 per 10g in the previous market session, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver fell Rs 500 to Rs 1,25,600 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday. —***PTI***

Rupee falls by 12P, closes at 88.14 against USD

MUMBAI, 4 SEPT

The rupee fell 12 paise to close at 88.14 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday amid sustained foreign fund outflows and a stronger greenback. However, positive sentiment in the domestic equity markets -- which were buoyed by the GST rate revision -- and a drop in international crude oil prices prevented sharper losses in the local unit, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.09 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 87.85-88.19 before settling at 88.14 (provisional), down 12 paise from its previous close. The rupee recovered 13 paise from its all-time low level to settle at 88.02 against the US dollar on Wednesday. —***PTI***

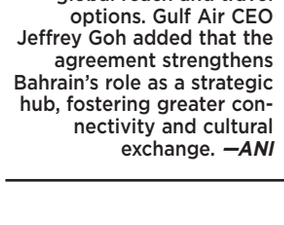


PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

SpiceJet, Gulf Air sign deal to boost connectivity

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Spice Jet has signed an interline agreement with Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, to enhance international and domestic connectivity. The partnership will allow Spice Jet passengers seamless access to Gulf Air's extensive network across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Central Asia via Bahrain. In return, Gulf Air customers will gain improved access to India through SpiceJet's widespread domestic routes. Gulf Air currently operates direct flights to eight Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Goa, Kochi, and Thiruvananthapuram. SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh said the deal marks a key milestone in expanding global reach and travel options. Gulf Air CEO Jeffrey Goh added that the agreement strengthens Bahrain's role as a strategic hub, fostering greater connectivity and cultural exchange. —***ANI***

GST cut on lifesaving drugs, medical device to aid patients

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The government's move to cut GST on medicines and medical devices while exempting lifesaving drugs from the levy is a bold step that will bring direct relief to patients and families while significantly reducing financial strain on them, pharmaceuticals and healthcare industry players said on Thursday.

The bold reforms will improve accessibility of medicines, ensure accessibility to quality healthcare and contribute positively to the government's vision of affordable healthcare for all, they said.

The government's decision to exempt life-saving and cancer medicines from GST is a step that will bring direct relief to patients and their families, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said.

Similarly, Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) Director General Anil Matai said, "The decision to reduce GST on lifesaving medicines -- bringing 33 essential drugs from 12 per cent to nil and three critical drugs for cancer, rare diseases, and other severe chronic conditions from 5 per cent to nil -- is both historic and compassionate."

> **(Industries must) pass on all these benefits of GST to the consumers. What we thought could be big has turned out to be the biggest ever reform that India has seen since independence. Besides many dimensions, consumers will benefit in a very big way with the reduction in taxes across the board, on almost all items of our day-to-day needs**
>
> -Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce and Industry Minister

NAT HEALTH President and Executive Chairperson Metropolis Health care Ltd Ameera Shah said, "By easing costs and improving affordability, the measure will enhance access to quality healthcare services, support early disease detection, and bring greater consistency by standardising GST rates across preventive, curative and rehabilitative care."

The industry players termed the landmark GST reforms as a decisive stride towards building a patient-centric, equitable, and resilient healthcare system. —*PTI*

GST exemption to make insurance affordable

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Terming the GST Council's decision to exempt insurance premium from the indirect tax as a landmark move, insurers said this will help make products more affordable and expand insurance penetration.

Anno uncing the outcome of 56th GST Council meeting, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said all individual life insurance policies whether term life, ULIP or endowment policies and subsequent reinsurance are exempt from GST.

- However, individual life and health insurance policyholders will benefit as the GST exemption on premium payments kick in from 22 September

All individual health insurance policies, including family floater policies and policies for senior citizens and reinsurance thereof, will also be exempt from GST, she said.

Since its inception in July 2017, GST at the rate of 18 per cent is levied on premium paid towards health insurance and life insurance.

Commenting on the GST Council decision, LIC CEO & MD R Doraiswamy termed the rate rationalisation as "visionary initiative".

Removal of GST on individual life insurance products, a step towards making life insurance more affordable to all citizens of the country to meet the objective of insurance for all by 2047, Doraiswamy said.

ManipalCigna Health Insurance MD & CEO Joydeep Saha this much-awaited reform will help millions of households safeguard themselves against unforeseen medical expenses without worrying about affordability at a time when medical costs and healthcare inflation are on the rise.

Additionally, life and health insurance firms will have to reverse the Input Tax Credit (ITC) accumulated till 21 September, 2025 after the GST exemption kicks in, raising cost burden on companies, according to tax experts.

However, individual life and health insurance policyholders will benefit as the GST exemption on premium payments kick in from 22 September.

Currently, 18 per cent GST is levied on premium payment for such policies. —*PTI*

GST Rate Changes : HEALTHCARE

Item	Old Rate	New Rate
Individual Health & Life Insurance	18%	NIL
Thermometer	18%	5%
Medical Grade Oxygen	12%	5%
All Diagnostic Kits & Reagents	12%	5%
Glucometer & Test Strips	12%	5%
Corrective Spectacles	12%	5%

Lower GST on dairy, agri essentials & machinery

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Industry leaders from the agriculture and dairy sectors have hailed the government's decision to reduce Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates on essential agricultural inputs and dairy products, describing it as a major relief for farmers struggling with rising input costs and unpredictable weather.

The GST Council has slashed rates on fertilisers, biopesticides, farm equipment and dairy products. The move is expected to ease farmers' financial burden, boost rural incomes and make nutritious food more affordable for consumers.

Sunil Kataria, CEO and MD of Godrej Agrovet Ltd, said the reduction in GST on fertilisers and biopesticides would provide "big relief" to farmers, as input costs account for 30–40 per cent of total cultivation expenses. Lower costs will improve access to crop protection solutions, helping farmers enhance yields and earnings.

Narinder Mittal, President of CNH India, welcomed the cut to 5 per cent on farm equipment, saying it would accelerate mechanisation, tackle labour shortages and improve productivity ahead of the harvest season.

Divya Kumar Gulati, Chairman of CLFMA, called the dairy reforms "progressive", benefiting 80M dairy farmers. UHT milk is now tax-free, while GST on products such as ghee, butter, paneer and cheese has been reduced from 12per cent to 5 per cent.

RG Agarwal of Dhanuka Agritech termed the cuts a "big Diwali gift", highlighting benefits for bio-pesticides and agri-drones, which promote safer, sustainable farming practices. —*PTI*

GST Rate Changes: Daily Essentials

Item	Old Rate	New Rate
Hair Oil, Shampoo, Toothpaste, Toilet Soap Bar, Tooth Brushes, Shaving Cream	18%	5%
Butter, Ghee, Cheese & Dairy Spreads	12%	5%
Pre-packaged Namkeens, Bhujia & Mixtures	12%	5%
Utensils	12%	5%
Feeding Bottles, Napkins for Babies & Clinical Diapers	12%	5%
Sewing Machines & Parts	12%	5%

'BOLD & PROGRESSIVE REFORM'

First-time car buyers will benefit from GST cuts

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The recent decision by the GST Council to reduce tax rates across various categories of automobiles has been hailed by industry leaders as a significant boost for the Indian automotive sector.

The new rates, effective from 22 September, will see GST on vehicles cut to 18 per cent for many smaller automobiles and motorcycles up to 350cc, while a 40 per cent rate will apply to larger vehicles.

Shailesh Chandra, President of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, noted, "This timely move will bring renewed cheer to consumers and inject fresh momentum into the sector."

He emphasised the benefits for first-time buyers and middle-income families, enhancing accessibility to personal mobility.

Similarly, CS Vigneshwar, President of the Federation of Automobile Dealers' Associations, called it a "bold and progressive reform" that simplifies the tax structure and boosts affordability during the festive season.

He stressed the need for seamless implementation to ensure benefits reach customers effectively.

GST Rate Changes: Automobile

Item	Old Rate	New Rate
Petrol & Petrol Hybrid, LPG, CNG Cars (not exceeding 1200 cc & 4000mm)	28%	18%
Diesel & Diesel Hybrid Cars (not exceeding 1500 cc & 4000mm)	28%	18%
3 Wheeled Vehicles	28%	18%
Motor Cycles (350 cc & below)	28%	18%
Motor Vehicles for transport of goods	28%	18%

Oil and gas exploration, and production will cost more as GST has been raised to 18 per cent from 12% per cet

Small car prices may drop

Commercial vehicles are also set to benefit, and electric vehicles will maintain a reduced GST rate of 5 per cent. Industry observers suggest small car prices could drop by up to Rs 1 lakh, reviving demand, particularly in smaller cities and towns, amidst the ongoing festive season. —*PTI*

Eldorado agritech to raise ₹1.1K cr through IPO

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Eldorado Agritech Ltd and Dev Accelerator Ltd (DevX) are set to mobilise over Rs 1,140 crore through initial public offerings (IPOs) as both companies gear up to strengthen their expansion plans.

Eldorado Agritech, known for its Srikar Seeds brand, has filed preliminary papers with SEBI to raise Rs 1,000 crore. The IPO includes a fresh issue of Rs 340 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 660 crore by promoters Srinivasa Rao

The Telangana-based company offers 226 hybrid and OPV seeds across 47 crops, holds 269 agrochemical registrations, 43 speciality fertiliser approvals, and 32 bio-stimulant registrations, with nine patents pending. It reported Rs 441 crore in revenue and Rs 71 crore PAT in FY25.

Meanwhile, Dev Accelerator has fixed a Rs 56-Rs 61 price band for its Rs 143 crore IPO, opening 10-12 September.

The fresh issue will fund fitouts, security deposits, debt repayment, and brand-building, with listing expected on 17 September. —*PTI*

RECORD FINES IN NATION

France fines Google, Shein over cookies

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Tech giant Google and Chinese online fashion platform Shein on Wednesday were fined by France's data protection authority CNIL for failing to abide by the internet cookies law, sources said.

According to sources, the two platforms received the harshest penalty CNIL has ever imposed, with a USD 175 million fine for Shein and a USD 378 million fine for Google.

Both platforms have tens of millions of users in France and have failed at securing users' free and informed consent prior to the set-up of advertising cookies on the platforms, said sources.

Cookies are data regarding the users' online activities which are saved in small files that the browsers can collect. These data are used by many major platforms for business models and online ads.

Cookies are data regarding the users' online activities which are saved in small files that the browsers can collect PHOTO: FREEPIK

Sources said that the authority said the firms still have time to appeal.

- The two platforms received the harshest penaltyCNIL has ever imposed, with a $175M fine for Shein and a $378M fine for Google

According to CNIL, over the past five years, market players use cookies as part of ther general strategy to bring them into line.

It added that Shein has been collecting a huge amount of data from its 12 million users in France using cookies.

Since the beginning of the probe, Shein has complied to CNIL's requirement to update its systems, while Google stated that the firm has complied to previous CNIL demands and will review the current decision. —*PTI*

Centre subsidises onions at Rs 24/kg in 3 states

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The centre has commenced the subsidised sale of onions at Rs 24 per kg in Delhi, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad to ensure consumers can access this essential kitchen staple at reasonable prices.

Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi launched mobile vans for the distribution, with 25 tonnes sourced from the buffer stock being sold through cooperative agencies, including Nafed and NCCF.

The subsidised onions will be available in areas where retail prices exceed Rs 30 per kg. From 5 September, the initiative will also extend to Chennai, Guwahati, and Kolkata, continuing until December. Current all-India average retail prices are around Rs 28 per kg, with higher prices recorded in some cities.

Joshi said the government aims to curb food inflation, which has seen general retail inflation fall to 1.55 per cent—the lowest in nearly eight years.

The buffer stock includes 3 lakh tonnes of onions procured at an average price of Rs 15 per kg, aimed at maintaining price stability during the festive season. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gukesh starts with a crushing victory over Bacrot

SAMARKAND, 4 SEPT

Seeking to prove himself across formats, reigning world champion D Gukesh of India began his campaign in the FIDE Grand Swiss here with a crushing victory over France's Etienne Bacrot in the first round. The Indian ace used all his resources at the right time to deliver a knockout punch when the situation arrived, and his choice of opening – the Caro Kann was deemed as a perfect defense to counter Bacrot. Winning with black means that Gukesh will play with white pieces in the next game, and his expertise there is well known. The youngest ever world champion has already done enough, but if he wins this event, it will be the icing on the cake.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Goa to host India's AFC Asian Cup qualifier

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Thursday announced that Goa will host the country's AFC Asian Cup Final Round Qualifier Group C match against Singapore on 14 October. The AIFF posted the decision on its social media pages. "The AFC Asian Cup Final Round Qualifier Group C match between India and Singapore on 14 October will be held at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, in Fatorda, Goa," it stated. The two teams are scheduled to play each other twice in October. The away leg will be held on October 9 at the National Stadium in Singapore. Singapore currently tops the group with a win and a draw, while India lies at the bottom, having managed a draw and a loss from its two games so far. —*PTI*

World Cup tickets to initially cost $60 to $6,730

MIAMI, 4 SEPT

Ticket prices for next year's World Cup will range initially from $60for group-stage matches to $6730 for the final, but could change as soccer's top event adopts dynamic pricing for the first time. The prices are up from a range of $25 to $475 for the 1994 tournament in the United States, and for the U.S. dollar equivalent $69 to $1,607 when ticket details were announced for the 2022 tournament in Qatar. "I think the message is Get yourtickets early,' especially if you know where you will be, because you live in that city, or you're a fan of the three hosting nations, and then you know already when and where they will play," said Heimo Schirgi, the World Cup's chief operating officer.—*PTI*

Sinner sets challenge to Djokovic, Bhambri seals SFs

Yuki progressed to his maiden Grand Slam semifinal

NEW YORK, 4 SEPT

Defending champion Jannik Sinner set down another marker in his bid to retain the US Open as he thrashed fellow Italian Lorenzo Musetti 6-1, 6-,4 6-2 in exactly two hours to extend his winning streak at the hard-court grand slams to 26 matches.

In Friday's semi-finals, Sinner will next play Felix Auger-Aliassime, who battled past Alex de Minaur in over four hours, while Novak Djokovic takes on Carlos Alcaraz in a mouthwatering clash, having retained his dominant streak over Taylor Fritz.

Earlier, Amanda Anisimova stunned Iga Swiatek to earn revenge for her 6-0, 6-0 defeat in the Wimbledon final and book a spot in the semi-finals. Just 53 days after the Americans trashed Swiatek on Centre Court, Anisimova got her own back in front of her own fans in New York.

Anisimova will face two-time champion Naomi Osaka for a place in her first US Open final.

Osaka defeated Karolina Muchova to continue her comeback run and reach her first grand slam semi-final in four years.

Bhambri seals in career-best Grand Slam show

India's Yuki Bhambri progressed to his maiden Grand Slam semifinal by advancing to the last four of the US Open men's doubles event with New Zealand partner Michael Venus. The Indo-Kiwi duo upset 11th seeds Nikola Mektic and Rajeev Ram 6-3, 6-7(8), 6-3 in a quarter-final clash on Court 17 to continue their impressive run on Wednesday.

Sinner and Djokovic **PHOTO: X/@USOPEN**

Yuki Bhambri **PHOTO: PTI**

Earlier, Bhambri and Venus had knocked out fourth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz in the pre-quarterfinals.

For Bhambri, 33, it marked a career breakthrough after years of battling injuries and transitioning from singles to doubles.

A former junior world No. 1 and the 2009 Australian Open boys' champion, he has now achieved his best result at a senior Grand Slam.

"It has been an incredibly nerve-wracking experience, and at this moment, there is a whirlwind of emotions," Bhambri said while speaking on Jio Hotstar.

"We are simply grateful to have prevailed in such a challenging match.

They got the break back to make it 4-4, but eventually lost the set in the tie-break when Bhambri served a double fault, facing set point.Bhambri saved a break point in game three of the decider to avert the danger. —*PTI*

DULEEP TROPHY 2025

Gaikwad smashes a century against Central Zone

BENGALURU, 4 SEPT

West Zone batter Ruturaj Gaikwad smashed a century on the opening day of the Duleep Trophy semifinal against Central Zone at the BCCI Centre of Excellence Ground in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Gaikwad notched up his eighth First-Class ton off 131 balls with the help of 13 fours. With his team in a spot of bother early in the day, Gaikwad stitched a crucial 82-run alliance for the third wicket with Aarya Desai and helped West Zone recover from 10 for two.

He then combined with Shreyas Iyer and Shams Mulani for partnerships worth 45 and 42 runs, respectively, to further steady the West Zone's innings. Gaikwad then forged a 148-run stand with Tanush Kotian for the sixth wicket before being dismissed for 184 off 206 balls (25x4, 1x6).

The ongoing Duleep Trophy, which kickstarts India's 2025-26 domestic season, is Gaikwad's first professional outing since the Indian Premier League, during which the Chennai Super Kings skipper suffered an elbow injury and was ruled out of the tournament after playing just five matches. The 28-year-old last represented India in July last year during the tour of Zimbabwe in the T20 format. Achieving consistency across formats and maintaining fitness will be at the top of Gaikwad's priority list during the domestic season as he looks to make a strong case for a return to national reckoning.

Gaikwad **PHOTO: PTI**

South Zone closes day at 297 for 3

It has become quite dark all of a sudden. The rain clouds are hovering over the ground, and the umpires are seen having a word with players about whether to continue.

N Jagadeesan was the standout performer on day 1, crafting a composed century to guide South Zone to a strong position.

South Zone 297 for 3 (Jagadeesan 148*, Padikkal 57, Tanmay 43, Sindhu 2-59, Kamboj 1-47) vs North Zone. —*PTI*

Classy India beat Malaysia 4-1, inch closer to Asia Cup final

RAJGIR, 4 SEPT

A determined India produced a masterclass performance, coming from a goal down to beat Malaysia 4-1 in their second Super 4s match of the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament here on Thursday.

The Indians were slow to get off the blocks as Shafiq Hassan gave Malaysia the lead in the second minute before the hosts mounted a great fightback. Manpreet Singh (17th), Sukhjeet Singh (19th), Shilanand Lakra (24th), and Vivek Sagar Prasad (38th) scored for India. India had drawn 2-2 against Korea in their first Super 4 match on Wednesday. With the win, India has moved to the top of the Super 4 standings with four points from two games, just ahead of China and Malaysia, both of whom have three points each, while defending champions Korea occupy the last spot with just a point.After a rest day on Friday, India will take on China in their final Super 4 match on Saturday, while Malaysia plays Korea. —*PTI*

TWO DECADES LATER

Mishra announces retirement from all forms of cricket

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Veteran India leg-spinner Amit Mishra on Thursday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, ending a career spanning more than two decades.

Having last played for India in 2017, the 42-year-old Haryana cricketer continued to feature in the IPL till the 2024 edition. Mishra confirmed his retirement to PTI over the phone.

"I have decided to retire," said Mishra.

In a statement, Mishra said the decision was largely based on repeated injuries and the belief that the younger generation needed to take over.

Mishra represented India in 22 Tests, 36 ODIs, and 10 T20s. His Test career yielded 76 wickets, while in ODIs he snared 64 scalps.

He was a classical leg-break bowler who made his Test debut against Australia in 2008, five years after he made his India debut in an ODI against South Africa in 2003.

With Harbhajan Singh and Anil Kumble starting most of the games at home, Mishra had to wait for his Test cap.

It was a successful debut for him as he took a five-wicket haul in the first innings before picking a couple more in the second innings. It ultimately became his only five-wicket haul in the traditional format.

Amit Mishra **PHOTO: PTI**

"These 25 years (first class debut in 2000) of my life in cricket have been nothing short of memorable. I am deeply grateful to the BCCI, the administration, the Haryana cricket association, the support staff, my colleagues, and my family members who were with me all this time. "I would like to thank the fans whose love and support, whenever and wherever I played, made the journey memorable. Cricket has given me countless memories and invaluable learnings, and each moment on the ground has been a memory I'll treasure for life," Mishra said in a statement issued later.

His last competitive game was for Lucknow Super Giants in the 2024 IPL season. His international career stagnated after R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja entered the scene.

In the statement issued on Thursday, Mishra also expressed the desire to stay involved in the game via coaching and commentary.

He racked up 535 wickets in an exemplary first-class career, while he collected 252 and 285 in List A and T20 cricket. —*PTI*

Scindia's son is MP Cricket Association's youngest prez

BHOPAL, 4 SEPT

Mahanaryaman Scindia, 29, was elected unopposed as the new president of the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association, MPCA, becoming the youngest to hold the post in the body's 68-year history.

The announcement came during MPCA's Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, attended by his father and Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who himself had steered the association for several years, and before him, grand father Madhavrao Scindia, the charismatic leader who first wove the Scindia family name into the fabric of state cricket.

The MPCA presidency has often been as much about the pitch as about politics.

Madhavrao was 37 when he first took charge. Jyotiraditya was 35 when he bested powerful rivals like Kailash Vijayvargiya in a fiery 2004 election. By contrast, Mahanaryaman's ascent has been smooth., With no other contenders filing nominations, his election was a foregone conclusion. "It's an emotional moment," Mahanaryaman told reporters after offering prayers at Indore's Khajrana Ganesh Temple., "My grandfather and father both served this association. MPCA is a family. Decisions are taken together.

I will try to promote cricket at the rural level and create more opportunities for daughters in the game." —*PTI*

Mahanaryaman Scindia **PHOTO: ANI**

YASTIKA BHATIA OUT OF ICC ODI

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

India international Yastika Bhatia has been ruled out of the upcoming home ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025, BCCI announced on Thursday.

"Yastika Bhatia sustained an injury to her left knee during India's preparatory camp in Vizag," BCCI said in a statement. "The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring Yastika Bhatia's progress, and the team wishes Yastika Bhatia a speedy recovery."

Bartwal opens India's campaign with a win

LIVERPOOL, 4 SEPT

Pawan Bartwal opened India's campaign with a hard-fought split-decision victory over Brazil's Michael Douglas da Silva Trindade in the men's 55kg opening round at the World Boxing Championships here on Thursday.Bartwal, making his debut on the big stage, overcame the Paris Olympian and 2023 Pan American Games silver medallist 3-2 in a scrappy contest that swung from one corner to the other. The Indian started the contest by landing a sharp jab early and raising the tempo towards the end of the opening round to edge out Trindade 3-2.The Brazilian responded in the second, forcing Bartwal onto the back foot with a flurry of power punches as both boxers traded heavily in messy exchanges.

Trindade pipped the Indian to take the round, leaving the bout finely balanced.But Bartwal regained control in the decider, letting his hands go with relentless combinations and finishing strongly to seal a victory. Later in the day, Sakshi (54kg), Sanamacha Chanu (70kg), and Harsh Choudhary (90kg) will kick off their campaigns. —*PTI*

Delhi High Court asks EFI to explain selection criteria

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The Delhi High Court has directed the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) to submit an affidavit within three weeks, detailing the selection criteria adopted to pick the Indian team for the upcoming Asian Youth Games, even as one more athlete has knocked on the judiciary door questioning his exclusion. The Youth Asian Games are scheduled to be held in Manama, Bahrain, from 22 to 31 October. The Court order came on a writ petition filed by show jumping athlete Vaasvi Khaitan, through her father Vedant Khaitan, challenging her exclusion from the list of eight probables named by the EFI.—*PTI*

40 PER CENT GST

IPL tickets to get costlier across country

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

Indian cricket fans, who love turning up for IPL matches across the country, will have to shell out more for tickets next season with the government raising the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on admission to these games from 28 per cent to 40 per cent.

According to a Ministry of Finance release issued late on Wednesday, "Admission to casinos, race clubs, any place having casinos or race clubs or sporting events like IPL will have GST of 40 percent with ITC (Input Tax Credit).

An IPL ticket with a base price of Rs 500 before GST till last season would ultimately cost Rs 640 with GST levied at 28 per cent. However, during the 2026 edition, the same ticket will now cost Rs 700 after the imposition of 40 per cent GST by the government.

This is because IPL tickets have been classified in the 'Luxury Goods' category. However, India's international games have been classified under other sporting events and would invite a lesser GST of 18 per cent on tickets priced above Rs 500.

Any tickets priced below Rs 500 will be exempted from GST.

The rule states: "Admission to other sporting events, including recognised sporting events where the ticket price is not more than `500 continues to be exempt, and if the ticket price is more than Rs. 500, it continues to be taxed at the standard rate of 18 per cent."

As far as IPL is concerned, the ticketing is not controlled by the BCCI, and every franchise decides the rates at their respective home grounds. —*PTI*

NDTL DEVELOPS NEW METABOLITE FOR GREATER ACCURACY IN DOPE TESTING

NEW DELHI, 4 SEPT

The National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) has taken a significant step towards achieving higher accuracy in the detection of a much-abused, banned anabolic steroid by developing a long-term metabolite from it that would allow an extended window to uncover the substance in urine samples.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya posted the development on his X page, hailing India's rapid emergence as a "global hub for sports science and innovation"."Proud to share that NDTL has developed a new reference material methandienone long-term metabolite to boost accuracy in dope testing by widening the detection window," he stated about the latest achievement of the laboratory that is accredited with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). "The material will also be shared with WADA-accredited labs worldwide, contributing to global anti-doping efforts," he said. Methandienone or Metandienone is an anabolic androgenic steroid that came into existence in the 1960s. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI